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Destination choice in novel and mature destinations: Effects of psychographic traits and anticipated need congruity on tourist intentions

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DESTINATION CHOICE IN NOVEL AND MATURE DESTINATIONS: EFFECTS OF PSYCHOGRAPHIC TRAITS AND ANTICIPATED NEED CONGRUITY ON TOURIST INTENTIONS

A Dissertation

by

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DESTINATION CHOICE IN NOVEL AND MATURE DESTINATIONS: EFFECTS OF PSYCHOGRAPHIC TRAITS AND ANTICIPATED NEED CONGRUITY ON TOURIST INTENTIONS

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ABSTRACT

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The tourism marketing literature shows that psychological variables are predictors of destination choice for vacations. However, research testing the effects of Plog's (1974) personality-based psychographic traits on destination selection has yielded inconclusive results. Based on the theory of market choice behavior (Sheth, Newman, and Gross, 1991a), this research proposes that tourist´s destination choice is influenced by the mediating effects of anticipated needs congruity (epistemic, emotional, functional, and social) in the relationship between Plog's psychographic traits and behavioral intentions, providing more explanation of destination preference for novel and mature beach resort destinations (Butler, 1980).

In order to conduct the study, data was collected from a sample of 450 consumers in the United States, stratified in terms of geography, income, and age according to national census demographic distribution. The research hypotheses were tested employing partial least squares-structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) in two models, one for each type of destination context (novel vs. mature). The study results show the mediation of anticipated needs congruity predicts tourist's behavioral intentions better than Plog's psychographic traits alone. Importantly, a common pattern in the effects of anticipated needs congruity on behavioral intentions was found for both novel and mature destinations, indicating that tourists expect to fulfill the same consumption needs when considering vacationing at beach resorts, regardless of the destination's

degree of development. The study also identified some measurement issues in Plog's psychographic scale. Theoretical implications of the research findings are discussed and managerial recommendations are presented for destination marketing managers.

DEDICATION

Dedico la conclusión de esta tesis y la obtención del grado doctoral a mi familia, profesores, y amigos. A Verónica, Teresita y Oliverín por su amor, paciencia y comprensión, pero también por su constante apoyo acompañándome para lograr esta meta. A papá y mamá por su ejemplo e inspiración para superarme a través del esfuerzo académico, así como a mis hermanos y hermana por el respaldo y confianza que me brindaron. A los profesores que he tenido y me han enseñado a lo largo de los años, así como a mis amigos que siempre me dieron ánimos e impulso para continuar adelante. Agradezco mucho a Dios por haberme permitido realizar este proyecto.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

Page

LIST OF FIGURES

Page

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

According to the United Nation´s World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2015), over the past sixty years tourism experienced continued expansion, becoming one of the largest and fastest-growing economic sectors in the world. Indeed, tourism has recently been growing faster than the wider economy and other notable industries such as automotive, financial services, manufacturing, retail, and health care (WTTC, 2015). Travel and tourism activities constitute US$ 1.5 trillion in exports annually, and account for nearly one tenth of the world´s gross domestic product (UNWTO, 2015). International tourism flows will continue to rise in significance and both, existing and new destinations, will face valuable opportunities derived from an increasing travel demand as tourism becomes increasingly affordable across the developing world (WTTC, 2015). In order for individual destinations to take advantage of the growing tourism market potential, tourism-reliant regions must look at what drives tourists to choose among the myriad of available destinations.

For decades, the tourism and travel sector has been of interest to marketing and consumer behavior researchers, addressing various issues related to the industry (Crampon, 1955, 1966; Darden and Perreault, 1975; Hawes, 1979; Kirkpatrick, 1940; MacCannell, 2002; Peters, 1961; Waugh, 1956; Wurst, 1955). One of the major streams of research in the field has focused on studying tourism destination selection (Ballantyne, Packer, and Axelsen, 2009; Choi et al. 2012; Decrop and Snelders, 2005; Jang and Cai, 2002; Moutinho, 1987; Um and Crompton, 1990; Van

Raaij and Francken, 1984; Woodside and Lysonski, 1989). Derived from such investigations, a number of factors that influence travel behavior have been identified as either demand or supply side variables (Perdue and Meng, 2006). In the tourism literature these variables have been broadly classified and named as "push" or "pull", respectively, following the push–pull model of travel motivation proposed by Dann (1977) and further expanded by Crompton (1979). According to this model, "push" forces cause tourists to leave home and seek some unspecified vacation destination, while "pull" forces compel them toward specific destinations perceived as attractive because of their attributes (Chon, 1989; Lee, 2009; Uysal and Jurowski, 1994). Thus, push factors are internal and are related to consumers´ individual and psychological traits, whereas pull factors are derived from the destination's attributes and characteristics (Crompton, 1979; Dann, 1981; Jang and Cai, 2002; Baloglu and Uysal, 1996; Yoon and Uysal, 2005; Yuan and McDonald, 1990).

Push and pull variables have been acknowledged as part of the consumer decision-making process in various destination choice models proposed in the literature (Moscardo et al., 1996; Moutinho, 1987; Um and Crompton, 1990; Van Raaij and Francken, 1984; Woodside and Lysonski, 1989). Yet, a better understanding of the factors underlying tourists´ decision-making process in choosing vacation destinations is needed, particularly in relation to the congruency between consumer's traits and lifestyles and destination types (Mansfeld, 1992; Pearce, 2011; Sirakaya and Woodside, 2005; Sirgy and Su, 2000). This understanding would allow destination managers to conceive and implement effective marketing strategies aimed at appealing to consumers with a greater likelihood of visitation and satisfaction (Baker and Cameron, 2008; Blain, Levy, and Ritchie, 2005; Crompton, Fakeye, and Lue, 1992; Crouch and Ritchie, 1999; Pratt et al., 2010; Uysal and Jurowski, 1994; Zamora, Valenzuela and Vasquez-Parraga, 2004).

Therefore, because push factors are psychological characteristics that are satisfied by traveling to places perceived to possess certain attributes, or pull factors, destination choice can be studied as a function of the interaction between push and pull factors (Uysal, Li, and Sirakaya-Turk, 2008). As described in the following sections, two models that are widely known in tourism research can be used from the perspective of push and pull factors with the purpose of explaining destination choice. However, inconclusive findings and limited predictive power derived from previous research calls for the consideration of other theoretical frameworks. In response to that research gap, it is proposed that the incorporation of psychological constructs from the consumer behavior literature can enhance the understanding of tourists' decision making with respect to destination choice.

Psychographics as Push Factors in Tourist's Choice

One of the best known models in tourism marketing is the one proposed by Plog (1974). In Plog's model, tourists are classified based on psychographic personality traits along a continuum called venturesomeness (Plog, 2002), with "allocentrics" on one extreme and "psychocentrics" on the other. According to Plog, allocentrics believe that what happens to them is largely under their control, so they feel comfortable making choices that involve some degree of variation or risk. Therefore, allocentrics are more likely to enjoy visiting unusual locations, so they prefer non-touristy, novel destinations that are unfamiliar to most people. At the other extreme, psychocentrics believe that what happens to them is largely out of their control, so they tend to make safe, consistent choices by preferring popular options. Thus, psychocentrics are more likely to select tourism destinations that are well known and overdeveloped, since they are not as adventurous as allocentrics and, thus, choose destinations with characteristics that are familiar to them.

According to the allocentrism-psychocentrism model, tourists' preferences for destinations can be generally predicted, depending on the extent to which the destination taps into tourists' individual, psychological needs (Plog, 1974, 1994, 2001, 2004, 2005). The influence of psychographics is consistent with various destination selection models, in which psychological characteristics are linked to tourists´ motivations and their destination choice for leisure travel (Mansfeld, 1992; McGuiggan, 2003; Moscardo et al., 1996; Moutinho, 1987; Sirakaya and Woosdise, 2005; Um and Crompton, 1990; Van Raaij and Francken, 1984; Woodside and Lysonski, 1989). Therefore, Plog´s psychographic traits can serve to investigate destination selection from the perspective of push factors (Uysal, Li, and Sirakaya-Turk, 2008), depending on their interaction with the degree of development of a destination as a pull factor, which is described next.

Destination Degree of Development as Pull Factors

Just like with consumer products, destinations have attributes and features that make them more or less attractive to different segments of travelers. Indeed, research on tourism destination choice has used theoretical approaches originated in marketing. For example, building on the product life cycle (PLC) concept (Catry and Chevalier, 1974; Levitt, 1965), Butler (1980) developed a tourism area life cycle (TALC) model to illustrate an evolutionary sequence in changes to the characteristics and positioning of destinations. Similarly to the process of new product adoption and diffusion studied in consumer behavior (Ma, Yang, and Mourali, 2014; Rogers, 1976; Sproles, 1981), the TALC contends that tourists choose destinations along different life cycle stages according to their individual psychological traits (Cooper, 1992). In his model, Butler defined various phases over the life-time of destinations, from an initial exploration stage when few travelers visit an area, to a point in which a well-

developed destination caters to mass tourism. Accordingly, tourists tend to prefer different types of destinations located along this evolutionary curve, depending on whether the destination possesses or not the desired characteristics (Butler, 1980, 1993, 2006).

The TALC is a composed of six stages with different degrees of development and product characteristics (Butler, 1980, 1993, 2006). In the "exploration" stage, tourists initially visit a new area in small numbers because it is not yet popular among many travelers and the access and tourist infrastructure is still incipient, which makes it novel or strange for most tourists. As more tourist infrastructure is provided and marketing and promotion activities increase, the awareness and number of visitors grow, so the area goes through successive phases of "involvement", "development", and "consolidation", making it less novel to tourists. The destination then becomes widely popular with a well-established image that attracts a larger mass of tourists, but enters into a "stagnation" stage as it starts showing lower growth rates than in previous stages, partly because it has become too commercialized. Finally, sometimes the destination moves into a phase of "decline" or "rejuvenation", depending on the success of the efforts taken by the destination´s stakeholders to reposition it in the market.

The influence of destination characteristics on tourists' choice described in the TALC is consistent with various destination selection models (Goodrich, 1978; Mansfeld, 1992; Moscardo et al., 1996; Moutinho, 1987; Sirakaya and Woosdise, 2005; Um and Crompton, 1990; Woodside and Lysonski, 1989). Therefore, the TALC as defined by Butler (1980), appropriately serves as a pull factor model to investigate tourism destination selection as a function of Plog's (1974) psychographic traits, as explained in the following section.

Research Problem

Theoretically, as can be seen in Figure 1, the tourists attracted to destinations in different stages of the TALC model coincide with the tourists described in Plog's (1974) psychographic continuum (Butler, 1980; Cooper, 1992; Cooper and Jackson, 1989; Dolnicar and Ring, 2014; Gale and Botterill, 2005; Gnoth, 1997; Gordon and Goodall, 1992; Keller, 1987; McKercher, 2005). For years, Plog's psychographic traits and the TALC have been studied separately by tourism and marketing researchers, assessing the validity of some of the concepts. For instance, segmentation studies have corroborated the identification of groups with the characteristics in Plog´s typology (Bello and Etzel, 1985; Chandler and Costello, 2002; Griffith and Albanese, 1996; Litvin, 2006; Litvin and Smith, 2016; Nickerson and Ellis, 1991; Park and Jang, 2014; Weaver, 2012; Williams, Ellis and Daniels, 1986), while various case studies have focused on distinguishing the stages of destination development as explained by the TALC (Douglas, 1997; Hovinen, 1981; Knowles and Curtis, 1999; Meyer-Arendt, 1985; Weaver, 1990). Surprisingly, insufficient empirical evidence is known about the relationship of these two models in terms of explaining destination selection.

Figure 1. Correspondence of Psychographic Traits and Destination Life Cycle

Author	Continuum	
	DESTINATION LIFE CYCLE	
Butler (1980)	***Undeveloped Destinations***	***Developed Destinations***
	⟷	
Plog (1974)	***Allocentrism***	***Psychocentrism***
	TOURISTS' VENTURESOMENESS TRAITS	

Adapted from Basala and Klenosky (2001) and Gordon and Goodall (1992).

Some empirical studies testing Plog's (1974) model have corroborated that his construct venturesomeness has some influence on tourists' attitudes and destination choice (George, Henthorne, and Williams, 2013; Griffith and Albanese, 1996; Litvin, 2006; Litvin and Smith, 2016; Williams, Ellis and Daniels, 1986). However, other studies found no support for the relation between Plog's personality-based psychographics and tourism destination choice (Jackson, White and Schmierer, 2000; Lee-Hoxter and Lester, 1987, 1988; Smith, 1990a), suggesting that destination choice is influenced by other psychological constructs not taken into account yet by researchers. Therefore, this study will demonstrate that constructs from the marketing and consumer research literature can be used to extend the understanding of tourists´ destination choice in complementarity with the models proposed by Plog (1974) and Butler (1980).

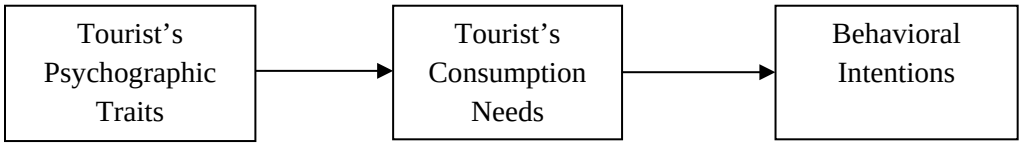
The Role of Consumption Needs

In addition to psychographic traits, other forces exert an influence on consumer decision making, such as the drive to satisfy various specific needs (Sheth and Mittal, 2004). For instance, according to the theory of market choice behavior (Sheth, Newman and Gross, 1991a, 1991b), consumer choice is a function of multiple consumption needs, reflected in the extent to which epistemic, emotional, functional, social, and conditional needs are satisfied by products. Epistemic needs lead people to try products that enhance knowledge and provide novel experiences, while emotional ones relate to products with characteristics that have the potential to arouse emotions and feelings. Functional needs are related to the utilitarian, instrumental attributes of products, whereas social ones pertain to the extent to which products convey an image congruent with what one wishes to project. Throughout different product categories and

consumption contexts, it has been suggested that consumers' needs help explain choices better than personality-based psychographic traits (Yankelovich and Meer, 2006).

Thus, this research contends that the effects of psychographic traits on buying behavior are better explained by taking into account the consumption needs outlined in the theory of market choice behavior, since needs are determinant of a person's multiple interests and consumption priorities (Muller, 1991). Under this approach destination choice would not only be a function of Plog´s (1974) concept of venturesomeness, but also of the various needs delineated by Sheth, Newman, and Gross (1991a, 1991b). In other words, the analysis of tourists´ consumption needs together with psychographic traits could provide a more complete understanding of why people prefer certain destinations over others for vacations. This proposition is consistent with the theoretical frameworks of buyer behavior by Howard and Sheth (1969) and Sheth and Mittal (2004), which posit that psychographic traits have an influence on the needs people have, which in turn, determine consumer choice in a mediation process as depicted in Figure 2.

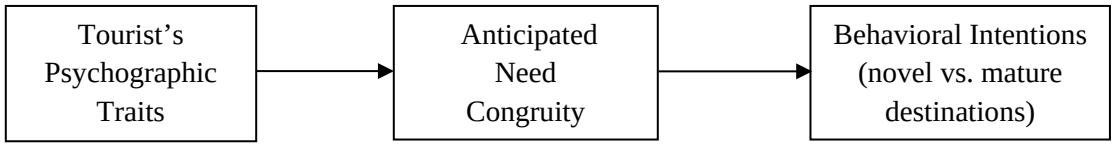
Figure 2. Mediating Role of Consumption Needs



However, in order to better observe the mediation effects of consumption needs this research considers the congruency approach based on the expectancy-value paradigm (Bagozzi, 1984a, 1985) to assess the influence of consumption needs on destination choice. Understanding the influence of consumption needs on behavioral intentions can be limited if no reference to the

object of interest (a holiday destination) or the perceived outcomes of an action (visiting the destination) is made. Instead, studying consumption needs with explicit reference to the object of interest takes into account the consumers' evaluations about the expected consequences of the object in satisfying those needs. Under this congruency approach, the effects of consumption needs can be more amply identified by measuring the extent to which tourists expect such needs will be satisfied by visiting a destination (Bosnjak et al. 2011; Sirgy and Su, 2000), referred here as anticipated need congruity. Therefore, this investigation examines tourist destination choice by proposing that an anticipated congruity of the consumption needs outlined by Sheth, Newman, and Gross (1991a, 1991b) will mediate the relationship between Plog's (1974) psychographic traits and intention to visit destinations with varied degrees of development (Butler, 1980), as shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Proposed Model of Anticipated Needs Congruity



In sum, the results of this research will provide new insights about tourists' decision-making process with respect to destination choice, by studying the predictive effects of psychographic traits and consumption needs on intention to visit destinations with different degrees of development. In addition, this work will provide an alternative way to examine the effects of consumption needs as determinants of tourists' preferences, via the congruency effect.

Importance of the Research

Although research findings have indicated that destination preference is influenced by psychological characteristics, further investigation is needed to encompass variations in motivation that can account for tourist behavior (Dann and Cohen, 1991; Pearce and Lee, 2005). As mentioned before, there is some evidence showing that push factors such as Plog´s (1974) psychographic traits have an effect on tourists' behavior (Chandler and Costello, 2002; Griffith and Albanese, 1996; Lepp and Gibson, 2008; Litvin, 2006; Liu, Siguaw and Enz, 2008; Nickerson and Ellis, 1991; Tarlow and Muehsam, 1992; Weaver, 2012; Williams, Ellis and Daniels, 1986). However, it is not clear how those psychographic characteristics are linked to pull factors, which specific types of destinations are predominantly preferred by different travelers, or if there is a choice pattern according to the destination´s degree of development (McKercher, 2005; Papatheodorou, 2004; Pearce, 2011).

As noted by Pearce and Packer (2013), one way of "integrating travel motivation studies into other aspects of tourism research lies in connecting the motivation models and patterns to destination choice studies" in the discipline (p. 391). Although TALC characteristics are relevant to the study of destination choice, most approaches followed in the past have ignored the evolutionary features and particularities of the tourism product (Papatheodorou, 2001). Scholars have generally focused on investigating tourist choice without specifically considering destination development characteristics noted in extant theoretical models, such as those distinguished by the TALC. Thus, assessing tourist´s preferences towards destination types under the TALC model is a response to long-standing calls for further research to address this gap in the literature (Gordon and Goodall, 1992; Haywood, 1986).

On the other hand, personality-based psychographics may be limited in predicting what types of destinations are chosen by leisure travelers when other facets of motivation are involved (Chon and Sparrowe, 2000). Even though Plog´s (1974) psychographic traits are able to offer some explanation of destination choice, they do not distinguish needs and wants that tourists may seek to satisfy when selecting a vacation destination (Goeldner and Ritchie, 2003). For instance, different travelers will place different weights on a wide range of motives and drives, including emotions, intellectual curiosity, social status signaling, or those related to a destination´s functional attributes (Pearce, 2011; Pearce and Lee, 2005). Thus, tourists in Plog´s typology might have other psychological, consumer-specific needs that are not fully captured by the psychocentrism-allocentrism continuum (Pearce and Packer, 2013).

According to Pearce (1993), advancing towards a sound theory of tourist motivation requires that researchers accommodate and organize existing tourist needs, integrating them with other drivers that influence decision making and behavior. Therefore, this work addresses the call by examining the connection between Plog´s (1974) venturesomeness construct and the consumption needs described in the theory of market choice behavior by Sheth, Newman and Gross (1991a, 1991b). Following Perugini and Bagozzi (2001), one approach to the revision of any theory is to introduce a variable that explains how existing predictors function to influence behavior. For example, "certain theoretical mechanisms can be better understood and their effects better qualified by introducing a new construct that mediates or moderates the effects of existing variables," in what "might be characterized as *theory deepening"* (Perugini and Bagozzi, 2001, p. 80, italics in original). As shown by Hsu, Cai, and Li (2010), tourist's needs and wants could serve as mediators to help explain tourists´ psychological processes during the destination selection process.

In sum, this investigation should provide further insights to explain how destination selection is influenced by the interaction between push and pull factors in the context of leisure vacations. This is relevant to the tourism literature because it builds on the extant theory in tourism marketing and destination choice in two ways. First, by assessing the predictive and nomological validity of widely-cited models in tourism, including Plog´s (1974) psychographic typology and the TALC, it will be possible to link them empirically to the consumer decision-making process. This research lacuna has been particularly noted by academics in the discipline for a long time (Butler and Wall, 1985; Haywood, 1986; Litvin, 2006; Papatheodorou, 2004; Smith, 1990b). Second, the incorporation of a wider range of needs and wants from the theory of market choice behavior (Sheth, Newmann and Gross, 1991a, 1991b) can provide a more nuanced understanding of the effects of needs on destination preferences, overcoming some of the current limitations of Plog's psychographic model.

Third, as an alternative way to look at the influence of consumption needs on destination choice, this research analyzes the role of anticipated need congruity, which captures the extent to which potential travelers expect a need will be satisfied by visiting a destination. In this regard, studying the congruency between consumer´s needs and a destination´s perceived attributes responds to a call in the field to extend and enhance our understanding of tourists´ behavior and decision making (Bosnjak et al., 2011; Butler, 1993; Goeldner and Ritchie, 2003; Kastenholz, 2004; Litvin and Goh, 2002; Mansfeld, 1992; Park and Jang, 2014; Pearce, 2011; Todd, 2001).

Finally, this study is relevant to the marketing literature because it contributes to the discipline from a theoretical and contextual perspective. Specifically, this research tests a number of hypotheses to assess whether a theory is able to explain consumer-related phenomena in a new context. By testing the theory of market choice behavior (Sheth, Newman and Gross,

1991a, 1991b) in the context of tourism destination selection, this work investigates theoretical frameworks and boundaries in a setting where they had not been extended (Whetten, 1989). In addition, this research adds to the extant theory in consumer behavior by studying competing models to explain decision-making processes (Ladik and Stewart, 2008). In this way, this investigation will expand to the body of knowledge in the discipline through the empirical examination of the relationship between theoretical constructs in the literature (Bagozzi, 1984b; Hunt, 2010; Kerlinger and Lee, 2000), guided by the following research questions and objective:

Research Questions

- Is the process of destination choice influenced by the intervening effects of anticipated need congruity between consumers´ psychographic traits and preference for destinations with different degree of development? If so, how?

Objective

- Investigate destination choice based on the effects of anticipated need congruity as a mediator between Plog's (1974) psychographic traits and preference for destinations with different degree of development as defined by Butler (1980).

In the next chapter, the extant literature related to destination choice models relevant to this investigation is reviewed. Also, the models by Plog (1974), Butler (1980), and Sheth, Newman and Gross (1991a) are discussed, along with the theoretical framework and proposed hypothesized relationships. Then, chapter 3 presents the methodology used to conduct the study and achieve the research objective, including a description of the research design, sampling and data collection process. Chapter 4 describes the statistical analyses and provides the results of the

hypotheses tests. Finally, chapter 5 presents the discussion of the research findings, conclusions, limitations, and suggests areas for further research.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, the major destination choice models in the extant literature are reviewed. Special attention is given to discussing push and pulls factors as the fundamental forces driving tourists' selection of holiday destinations. Next, a review of the literature orients the research approach towards the study of destination choice according to the tourists' psychological traits and characteristics. A description of Plog's (1974) personality-based psychographic construct is presented, noting the research efforts that have been made to assess its predictive power and its connection with Butler's (1980) TALC. Then, the theory of market choice behavior by Sheth, Newman and Gross (1991a) is described, proposing a model where consumption needs mediate the relationship of Plog's psychographics and the TALC. Finally, the theoretical framework to study the mediation model and a set of hypotheses are presented.

Tourist Decision Making

Analyzing consumers´ buying behavior has long been recognized as a crucial component in the strategy for marketing goods and services effectively (Borden, 1964). Research shows that there is not a unique decision-making process that is always followed by consumers in purchase situations (Bettman, Luce, and Payne, 1998; Beatty and Ferrell, 1998; Meyer et al., 1997; Olshavsky and Granbois, 1979; Zaichkowsky, 1985, 1986). However, the marketing literature provides evidence that, overall, supports the existence of a generic decision-making model that helps explain consumers´ choice processes (Bunn, 1993; Dellaert and Häubl, 2012; Gollwitzer

and Sheeran, 2009; Lawson, 2000; Lavidge and Steiner, 1961; Levav, Reinholtz, and Lin, 2012; Moorthy, Ratchford, and Talukdar 1997; Puto, 1987).

The generic decision-making perspective posits that purchase behavior is largely determined by psychological factors, which lead consumers to consider and evaluate product alternatives based on their attributes and characteristics (Engel, Blackwell, and Kollat, 1978; Howard, 1977; Howard and Sheth, 1969; Nicosia, 1966). Motivations are among the psychological factors that have a major impact on consumer decisions, since they are the forces that cause people to take action to satisfy a specific need or want (Donavan, Minor, and Mowen, 2016; Kotler and Armstrong, 2008; Lamb, Hair, and McDaniel, 2012; Lawson, 2000; Lunn, 1974). According to one of its earliest definition in the marketing literature, motivation includes the drives, urges, wishes, or desires that initiate the sequence of events leading to behavior (Bayton, 1958). Therefore, understanding the psychological motivations that make people choose among various product alternatives is crucial for explaining consumer decision making.

In order to conduct this investigation, revising the role that motivation plays in the selection of vacation destinations is needed. This will allow the recognition of the way in which motivation has been conceptualized, identifying research approaches to orient this investigation. Thus, the following section reviews how motivational forces have been addressed in the travel and tourism literature and, specifically, how they are treated in the major destination choice models.

Motivation in Tourist Behavior Research

In the literature related to tourism marketing and consumer behavior, the destination selection process is similar to the generic purchase decision model, where tourists narrow down choices among various destination alternatives to arrive at a final decision (Sirakaya and

Woosdise, 2005). Informed by the theories of buying behavior derived from marketing and consumer research, destination selection is viewed as the outcome of a process whereby many variables interact for potential tourists to achieve the greatest benefit from their choices. Similar to the "grand models" developed to explain the purchase of conventional goods and services, the models proposed to explain destination choice emphasize the role of tourist motivation as a function of consumer characteristics and destination attributes (Sirakaya and Woosdise, 2005, p. 815).

In the early literature in travel research, the reasons and motives that influence people to travel were not clearly defined by a theoretical or conceptual framework specific to the field of tourism (Keints, 1968; Lundberg, 1971, 1972). Thus, by drawing from theories in social psychology and consumer behavior, later investigations eventually identified and conceptualized motivational forces as "push" and "pull" factors that interact to drive tourist behavior (Chon, 1989; Crompton, 1979; Dann, 1977). Both factors are related, but they are separate, distinct constructs (Todd, 1999). While push factors are internal to tourists and constitute the psychological motives for travel, pull factors are related to the appeal of the destination´s perceived attributes and characteristics (Andreu et al., 2005; Baloglu and Uysal, 1996; Crompton, 1979; Dann, 1977, 1981; Gnoth, 1997; Jang and Cai, 2002; Lee, 2009; Yoon and Uysal, 2005; Yuan and McDonald, 1990).

Push factors have been defined as the intrinsic drives that trigger people to travel, such as the desire for escape, relaxation, prestige, adventure, or social interaction (Andreu et al., 2005; Uysal and Jurowski, 1994). On the other hand, pull factors are those that emerge as a result of the attractiveness of a destination, as perceived by those people with a propensity to visit it (Uysal and Jurowski, 1994). Pull factors encompass the tangible characteristics and ambiance of

a given destination, such as beaches, accommodation and recreation facilities, or cultural and historical resources (Andreu et al., 2005). Push factors are "internal" and pull factors are "external" to consumers, but conceptually they interact to make up the motivational forces that determine tourists´ decisions. According to Pearce (2011) and Pearce and Packer (2013), the two forces are intertwined in a dualism, in which push factors are the fundamental psychological motives that, by way of contrast, correspond to the features of a destination that are more likely to attract tourists.

Therefore, destination selection is a function of the match between push and pull factors. Destinations are chosen because their characteristics exert a pull force on consumers who possess certain psychological needs, whereby the needs are expected to be satisfied by traveling to the destination and engaging in the tourism experience there (Crompton, Fakeye, and Lue, 1992; Kim and Lee, 2002; Iso-Ahola, 1982; Woodside, 1982). As shown next, the interaction between push and pull factors in destination selection has been acknowledged as part of the consumer decision-making process in various well-known destination choice models proposed by scholars.

Push and Pull Factors in Tourism Destination Choice Models

As can be seen in Table 1, the various destination choice models proposed in the literature over the years have placed different emphasis on push and pull factors with respect to their role in tourists' decision making. Some researchers approached the study of destination choice processes by giving attention to push factors only. For example, Van Raaij and Francken (1984) proposed a generic model of travel decision making, which included destination selection as one stage among other vacation-related decisions. According to the authors, individual consumer characteristics such as needs and wants play a crucial role in vacation decision

making. By visiting the selected destinations, tourists expect to satisfy different needs such as rest and recovery, social contact, new experiences, or self-fulfillment. The model by Van Raaij and Francken (1984) was one of the earliest to specifically acknowledge the importance of push factors in determining which destinations people choose for vacations. However, the model was entirely conceptual and the authors did not test it empirically.

Table 1. Major Choice Models in the Tourism Literature

Author(s) and Year	Description of the Research	Focal Constructs in the Model		Constructs Subject to Empirical Test
		Push Factors	Pull Factors	
Schmoll (1977)	Conceptual model proposing a model of travel decision process. Based partly on Howard and Sheth (1969), the model encompasses a series of travel-related decisions, including destination choice.	Sociodemographic characteristics, Motives, Values, Personality, Attitudes, Risk assessment	Previous travel experience, Marketing mix, Destination Image, Travel constraints, Recommendation (WOM)	None
Goodrich (1978)	One of the earliest empirical studies of the determinants of destination preferences. The relationship between destination perception and choice was tested, demonstrating that the more favorable the perception, the greater the likelihood of choice. Data was collected from American Express' travel customers (n=230).		Attributes and benefits of destination	Attributes of the destination
Van Raaij and Francken (1984)	Conceptual work proposing that decision making among family members is the central part of tourist´s decision process. According to this model, decision making is sequential, and individual- and household-related variables play a major role in the selection process.	Individual characteristics, Sociodemographic characteristics, Household characteristics		None

Author(s) and Year	Description of the Research	Focal Constructs in the Model		Constructs Subject to Empirical Test
		Push Factors	Pull Factors	
Moutinho (1987)	Conceptual work that discussed the way in which different factors influence consumer behavior in the context of tourism; integrated them in a broad model of travel decision making. A vacation package decision process is presented.	Motivation, Personality and self-concept, Attitudes, Values, Feelings, Risk assessment	Marketing communications, Social and cultural influence, Previous travel experience, Destination image, Travel constraints	None
Um and Crompton (1990)	The longitudinal study focused on testing hypotheses related to the influence of attitudes for traveling to destinations in tourists' consideration sets. Data from a panel of respondents (n=100) in the United States was used. Results showed that destination alternatives with the most positive attitudes (perceived as facilitators) toward destinations tend to become consumers´ final selections.	Personal characteristics, Motives, Values, Attitudes	Previous visits, Marketing mix, Recommendation (WOM)	Attitudes as facilitators to travel
Woodside and Lysonski (1989)	The cross-sectional study was based on data from travelers of New Zealand (n=92), testing the formation of consideration sets and their role in shaping preferences and visit intentions. Participants retrieved potential destination alternatives from their long-term memory, and those with the most positive associations were the ones that ranked first in travel preferences and visit intentions.	Previous experience, Lifecycle, Income, Lifestyles, Values, Affect (positive/ negative)	Product characteristics, Price, Advertising, Distribution channels, Situational variables	Previous experience and affect (positive/ negative)

Author(s) and Year	Description of the Research	Focal Constructs in the Model		Constructs Subject to Empirical Test
		Push Factors	Pull Factors	
Mansfeld (1992)	Conceptual model that includes motivation as the main element that triggers the choice process, which consists of information gathering, elimination of alternatives, and actual choice.	Motivation, Values, Socioeconomic characteristics	Formal information (commercial sources), Informal information (social sources), Norms	None
Pearce (1993)	Proposed a conceptual model of tourist motivation based on Maslow's (1954) theory. Tourist's needs are arranged in hierarchical levels influencing various aspects of travel behavior, including destination choice. Presented empirical results supporting that travel behavior can be explained by a mixture of various needs simultaneously, in different degrees, rather than just by one single need. Identified relationships between tourist's needs and demographic characteristics and travel styles.	Tourist needs		Tourist needs
Moscardo et al. (1996)	Propose the Activities-Based Model of Destination Choice where activities at destinations (attributes) are the crucial link between tourist motivation and destination choice. The model was tested by using secondary data from Australian residents (n=1,503). Results showed consistent relationships between motivation and activities, and between activities and features of preferred destination.	Motives, Demographic variables, Experience, Available time	Attributes of destination (activities), Marketing communication	Motives and destination attributes

Other models concentrate on pull factors in order to explain tourism destination choice. One of the first pull-factor models was offered by Goodrich (1978), who studied the relationship between perceived attributes of vacation destinations and travel preferences. Using a "Fishbein-type choice or attitude model" (Goodrich, 1978, p. 8), data including preference rankings of nine international tourism areas from 230 customers of a large travel company were analyzed. Features evaluated by respondents included accommodation facilities, leisure and entertainment activities, historic and cultural interest, scenic beauty, among others. Results showed that choice of a destination is enhanced when tourists perceive that the destination possesses a number of characteristics ranked favorably by them. The findings obtained by Goodrich (1978) are specifically important because no empirical research had previously corroborated the relationship between perceptions of a destination´s attributes and visit intention. Thus, the investigation is relevant for its recognition of pull factors as crucial in influencing traveler´s destination choice. Nevertheless, the study neglected the role played by push factors, providing only a partial picture of how both motivational forces shape travel destination decisions.

A number of models recognized both, push and pull factors together, as key determinants in the destination choice. For instance, Schmoll (1977) proposed a conceptual model of travel decision process that included tourists' personal, internal variables as well as external variables and stimuli determining travel behavior. Similarly, Mountinho (1987) developed a broad conceptual framework underscoring the role of push factors such as educational, relaxation, adventure, or pleasure motives, and pull factors including attractions and amenities according to the destination´s image. As with Schmoll's (1977) and Van Raaij and Francken's (1984) models, destination selection is usually one decision in a range of several sub-decisions, along with transportation, accommodations, and other vacation-related activities. However, the

importance of Moutinho's (1987) proposal is that it incorporated an extensive number of push and pull variables into a single, major model that depicted the destination choice process.

Other works followed, presenting various models to explain destination choice. For example, Woodside and Lysonski (1989) proposed what they called a general model of tourism destination choice which took into account the influence of push and pull factors, whereby the formation of consideration sets in potential travelers is the result of the interaction between their psychographic traits and destination attributes. Mansfeld (1992) postulated a model that positioned motivation as the most fundamental stimulus for traveling, influencing tourists' selection according to the extent to which attributes of a destination are expected to address their needs. Shortly after, Pearce (1993) introduced a model, called the travel career ladder (later renamed travel career pattern in Pearce and Lee, 2005), in which different tourist needs determine behavior according to the person's changing travel experience. However, neither Woodside and Lysonski (1989), Mansfeld (1992), nor Pearce (1993) conducted empirical tests of push and pull variables on traveler´s destination choice.

Two destination choice models in the literature outlined the effects of push and pull factors and were empirically analyzed. The first one was presented by Um and Crompton (1990) and emphasized travelers´ psychographic characteristics, along with destination characteristics, as inputs to form attitudes toward alternative destinations. Under this approach, potential travelers estimate the subjective probability that a given destination will be perceived as possessing the attributes deemed to satisfy needs. For example, the push factors dimensions included travel needs such as novelty, challenge, relaxation, learning, and curiosity. The authors operationalized pull factors as the extent to which a destination is perceived to offer specified attributes, such as good climate, attractive natural environment, or entertainment and recreation

activities. A longitudinal analysis was conducted with data from 100 respondents and concluded that attitudes toward destinations are significant indicators "for predicting whether or not a vacation place is selected as a final destination from the alternatives in the awareness set" (Um and Crompton, 1990, p. 445). However, the authors did not distinguish needs and attributes as separate factors, for these were subsumed into respondents' overall attitudes toward destinations. Thus, the operationalization precluded assessing how push and pull factors work with each other to predict destination choice.

The second push-pull model was developed by Moscardo et al. (1996), who posited that travel motivations influence vacation destination choice through preferred activities available at the destination. Data collected from 1,503 participants who had taken an overseas vacation were used to segment tourists according to their needs for traveling. By analyzing destination attribute ratings given by each segment, destination selection was inferred based on a match between tourists' needs and destinations' perceived characteristics, supporting "a link between motivations and destination choice through benefits and activities" offered by destinations (Moscardo et al., 1996, p. 121). For instance, travelers with escape and relaxation needs tended to choose destinations with nightlife and entertainment activities, whereas those with glamour and social status needs were more likely to prefer destinations with golf, tennis, and shopping. Tourists with self-development needs had significantly higher preferences for destinations with museums, art galleries, and historical or archaeological sites. Therefore, Moscardo et al. (1996) provided better insights into the influence of push and pull factors on destination choice which had only been theoretically outlined by previous models.

In sum, as shown in the review of the major models in the literature, any attempt to explain destination selection must take into consideration both push and pull factors in studying

motivations of travelers. In comparison to the various destination choice models proposed in the literature, the approach followed by Moscardo et al. (1996) proved more useful in identifying the relationship between tourist needs and the types of attributes at destinations. By incorporating push and pull factors into a single conceptual model, the empirical test by Moscardo et al. (1996) demonstrated that travelers may be segmented by matching a destination' s characteristics with the similar needs of travelers.

This is in line with the work of Shoemaker (1994), who noted that even if researchers are able to identify motivations for travel and desired benefits, they have yet to divide groups of consumers into appropriate segments in order to understand the determinants of destination choice. As shown by research conducted in the field under different methodologies (Bloom, 2005; Goldsmith and Litvin, 1999; González and Bello, 2002; Hsieh, O'Leary and Morrison, 1994; Johns and Gyimóthy, 2002; Kuo, Akbariaa and Subroto, 2012; Locker and Perdue, 1992; Muller, 1991; Plog, 2005), market segmentation is a suitable, practical tool to distinguish various tourist types and understand their travel behavior. Thus, this investigation of destination choice will be approached by studying tourists based on their common psychological characteristics.

Tourist Characteristics and Destination Preferences

Segmenting people according to psychological variables allows the identification of consumer profiles with common individual traits, such as attitudes, values, and needs (Hoffman et al., 2005; Lamb, Hair, and McDaniel, 2012; Morwitz and Schmittlein, 1992; Smith, 1956; Wind, 1978). By dividing potential customers into measurable, relatively homogeneous groups with similar characteristics, marketers are able to target the segments identified as prone to prefer certain products or brands over other alternatives (Bucklin and Gupta, 1992; Evans, 1959; Haire, 1950; Haley, 1968; Kotler and Armstrong, 2008; Loudon and Bitta, 1993). In this respect, one

segmentation approach in marketing research is through psychographics, which is defined as "quantitative research intended to *place* consumers on psychological –as distinguished from demographic– dimensions" (Wells, 1975, p. 197, emphasis added) and can be employed to study and predict consumer behavior.

Psychographics allows the investigation of deeper aspects about the nature of marketing exchanges (Bagozzi, 1975) and constitutes a practical, effective basis for segmentation according to diverse lifestyles and personality characteristics (Boote, 1984; Lin, 2002; Wind, 1978; Winters, 1992). This is especially important for research on motivation, because market segmentation based solely on behavioral, demographic, or socioeconomic measures cannot reveal psychological differences that are crucial in consumer studies (Demby, 1994; Kotler and Armstrong, 2008). Thus, by overcoming the limitations of using only demographic and socioeconomic variables, psychographic segmentation is a fundamental research tool to help gain better insights into underlying motivations for travel (Madrigal, 1995; Plog, 1994; Sedmak and Mihalič, 2008; Tkaczynski, Rundle-Thiele and Beaumont, 2009; Schewe and Calantone, 1978).

Consumer segments in travel and tourism research have been usually described and represented in the form of tourist typologies and categorizations (Hudson, 1999; Lowyck, Van Langenhove, and Bollaert, 1992). According to Myers (1974), a consumer typology is essentially a classification of persons into various types or classes based on a set of defined criteria, which usually are psychological and/or sociological variables. Derived from empirical classifications of people into groups or clusters with similar characteristics, different market segments may become the basis for the profiles of consumers depicted in a typology (Myers and Nicosia, 1968). By providing a more nuanced identification and understanding of consumer segments, specific typologies based on tourists´ psychological and motivational characteristics

are useful in analyzing travel behavior, as shown in the works by Cohen (1972, 1979), Smith (1977), Perreault, Darden, and Darden (1977), Pearce (1985), Yiannakis and Gibson (1992), Moscardo et al. (2000), Lehto, O'Leary, and Morrison (2002), or Torres and Nelson (2008).

Perhaps the best well-known psychographic typology of tourists is the one proposed and extended by Plog (1974, 1991b, 1994, 1995, 2001, 2002, 2004) which classifies tourists types according to personality-based traits along a continuum anchored by "allocentrics" on one side and "psychocentrics" on the other, representing the construct referred to as venturesomeness. In Plog´s model of venturesomeness, the destinations chosen by tourists can be predicted according to the degree of allocentrism or psychocentrism of travel market segments. According to Plog, allocentrics are venturesome, self-assured people who are likely to seek out novel, unique spots to visit while their counterparts, psychocentrics, are self-inhibited, anxious people who tend to prefer commonplace, well-developed tourist destinations. In between the two types of tourists, midcentrics possess a mix of allocentrism and psychocentrism characteristics that make them more prone to visit destinations with moderate growth levels and increasing popularity (Plog, 1974, 1990).

The allocentric-psychocentric model is among the most cited and studied works in travel and tourism research (Benckendorff and Zehrer, 2013; Harrill and Potts, 2002; Hudson, 1999; McKercher, 2005; Dimanche and Havitz, 1994; Pearce, 2011). The model has attracted considerable interest throughout the years, to the extent that it is widely referenced in the field of tourism research and "it is included in virtually every tourism textbook" (Litvin, 2006, p. 246). In addition, according to the model´s author, the psychographic typology has been successfully employed in consulting and applied research for over 30 years (Plog, 1990, 1991b, 2001, 2002).

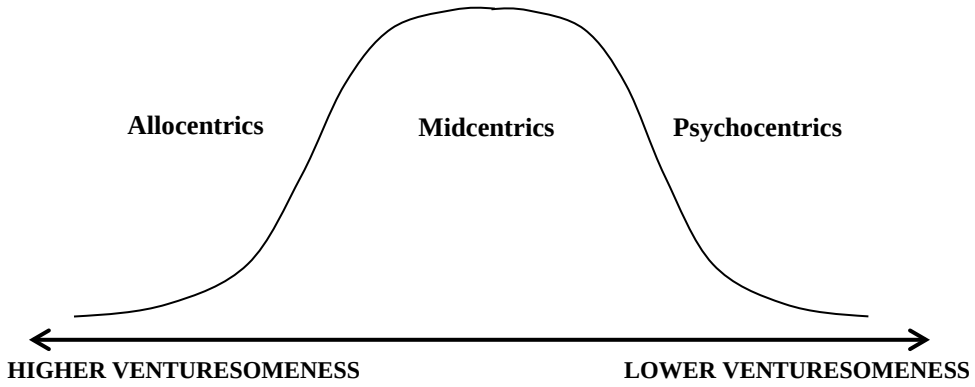
Because of the popularity of Plog´s (1974) model, tourists´ destination selection has been often regarded as a direct outcome of the motives attributed to the psychographic traits in the allocentric-psychocentric continuum. Although some published academic works have tested the validity of Plog´s venturesomeness concept in predicting destination choice, the results to date are inconclusive (Griffith and Albanese, 1996; George, Henthorne, and Williams, 2013; Jackson, White and Schmierer, 2000; Lee-Hoxter and Lester, 1987, 1988; Litvin, 2006; Smith, 1990a, 1990b; Williams, Ellis and Daniels, 1986). Therefore, this research contributes to the tourism marketing literature by investigating psychological constructs that could mediate and enhance the effects of Plog's psychographic traits on the selection of tourism destinations. As shown in the next section, tourists' degree of venturesomeness can serve as a push-factor construct to better understand the process of destination choice.

Plog´s Psychographic Typology

The allocentrism-psychocentrism concept originated in 1967 as part of a research sponsored by 16 domestic and foreign airlines, airframe manufacturers, and various magazines in order to understand the psychology of certain segments of travelers (Plog, 1974, 1990). With the introduction of commercial jet airplanes, it was estimated that new capacity for the airlines was about to develop much more quickly than the expected growth in air travel. Therefore, the purpose of the project was "to determine what could be done to broaden the base of the travel market, that is, to turn more nonflyers into flyers" (Plog, 1994, p. 213). The proprietary study consisted of a qualitative phase based on face-to-face, two hour personal interviews with flyers and nonflyers, followed by a quantitative test with a national sample of 1,600 in-home surveys. The results from that research as well as other related projects (Plog, 1991b) was a personality-

based psychographic typology of travelers, expressed on a normally distributed continuum as depicted in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Plog´s Venturesomeness and Psychographic Types of Tourists



Adapted from Plog (1974, 1995, 2002)

Allocentrics, also called venturers by Plog (2001, 2002, 2006), are more likely to prefer novel, non-touristy places in order to enjoy the area before others do, because they are self-confident and have varied interest patterns. These individuals feel that what happens to them is largely under their own control, so they are comfortable making choices that involve some degree of variation or risk. The term allocentric comes from the root words “allo”, meaning “varied in form”, and “centric” meaning focusing of his or her interest patterns on varied activities (Plog, 1974). Conversely, psychocentrics or dependables are more likely to select destinations that are well known and overdeveloped, since they are less self-confident than allocentrics and, thus, tend to choose destinations with characteristics somehow familiar to them (Plog, 2001, 2002, 2006). These individuals believe that what happens to them is largely beyond their control, so they try to make safe, consistent choices by preferring popular things. The term psychocentric comes from “psyche”, meaning “self”, and “centric” meaning centering his or her thoughts or concerns on the small problems of daily life (Plog, 1974). In between the two

extreme types, mid-centrics or centrics are those travelers that combine traits of both, allocentrics and psychocentrics, with possible leanings to either one direction or the other on the continuum of venturesomeness (Plog, 2001, 2002, 2006).

Plog´s (1974) psychographic concept is an appropriate framework for investigating destination selection, since the role of goal-striving dimensions in personality are closely tied to consumer motivation and behavior (Baumgartner, 2002). Research has found that studying consumers' personality traits helps in understanding their travel style and choices (Lepp and Gibson, 2008; Menezes and Chandra, 1989; Reisinger and Mavondo, 2004, 2005). According to McGuiggan (2003), "personality will influence vacation preference through the development of motives", which in turn "give rise to weighted vacation attribute preferences" as determinants of traveler´s choice (p. 187). Thus, knowing where people fit in the allocentric-psychocentric continuum can help explain their behavior as tourists, including the "types of travel products they prefer, places they like to visit, travel experiences they select at destinations", as well as other appeals (Plog, 2002, p. 246).

As can be seen in Table 2, in the tourism literature several empirical studies have employed Plog´s (1974) concepts over the years to research travelers' behavior. These studies have addressed various conceptual aspects of Plog's model, either by scrutinizing the psychological dimensions of the typology or by assessing the validity of the construct from different perspectives. Some works have tested the model´s ability to predict destination choice (Griffith and Albanese, 1996; Jackson, White and Schmierer, 2000; Lee-Hoxter and Lester, 1987, 1988; Litvin, 2006; Litvin and Smith, 2016; Smith, 1990a; Williams, Ellis and Daniels, 1986). However, findings about the predictive power of Plog's venturesomeness have been

inconclusive, suggesting that additional constructs from complementary theoretical frameworks are needed to take into account.

Table 2. Empirical Research on Plog´s Psychographic Model

Author(s) and Year	Tested Destination Choice	Study Samples	Results/Findings
Williams, Ellis and Daniels (1986)	Yes	Attendants at a national travel-related convention.	Psychographic measures and travel preferences of participants (n=130) were analyzed though canonical correlation. Results showed the differentiation between allocentrism and psychocentrism. While destination preferences were generally consistent with Plog´s model, findings suggested that the same tourist may choose to visit allocentric places, but also enjoy psychocentric experiences.
Lee-Hoxter and Lester (1987)	Yes	College students	Study participants (n=33) responded to a personality questionnaire and were classified as allocentrics or psychocentrics. In addition, respondents ranked their preference for visiting three allocentric and three psychocentric destinations. Correlation analyses showed that destination choice did not correspond to the personality types as suggested by Plog.
Lee-Hoxter and Lester (1988)	Yes	College students	Study participants (n=78) responded to a personality questionnaire, ranked their preference for visiting three allocentric and three psychocentric destination, and provided preferred activities while on vacation. The same classification procedure and destination ratings used in Lee-Hoxter and Lester's (1987) study were conducted. Correlations did not support the associations predicted by Plog.
Smith (1990a)	Yes	Respondents in France, West Germany, United Kingdom, Switzerland, Hong Kong, Japan and Singapore.	Study participants (n=1,500) were asked about their motivations to travel and their destination preferences. Analysis classified respondents according to the allocentrism-psychocentrism psychographic typology. The top five preferred destinations of each

Author(s) and Year	Tested Destination Choice	Study Samples	Results/Findings
			psychographic type did not follow the preference pattern predicted by Plog's model.
Smith (1990b)	No	Respondents in France, West Germany, United Kingdom, Switzerland, Hong Kong, Japan and Singapore.	A rejoinder article responded the criticism and observations made by Plog (1990) regarding the instrument used by Smith (1990a). Additional results of travel styles preferred by each psychographic type are presented, supporting the conclusions drawn by Smith.
Nickerson and Ellis (1991)	No	Alumni of a Western university in the USA.	Study participants (n=171) were analyzed according to the typology of Plog's psychographic continuum and Fiske and Maddi's (1961) activation theory. In addition, they were asked to rate the likelihood of taking an allocentric or psychocentric vacation. By using structural equation analysis, the dimensions of Plog's model were validated by correlating them to dimensions in the activation theory.
Tarlow and Muehsam (1992)	No	Airport passengers and other groups of consumers (students, retirees, prisoners).	Study participants (n=331) answered Plog´s test of allocentrism-psychocentrism in order to test for differences among groups in the sample. Findings revealed that the sample followed a normal distribution as predicted by Plog, but particular differences among groups were only identified for a factor the authors called "cosmopolitanism".
Madrigal (1995)	No	Visitors to a tourist destination in Arizona.	Examined the relationship between List of Values (LOV) and Plog's psychographic scale, based on the responses of tourists (n=514). The LOV scale was able to differentiate traveler style, while Plog's instrument was unable to do so.
Griffith and Albanese (1996)	Yes	Undergraduate students at a large Midwestern university in the USA.	Study participants (n=145) were asked to describe the most recent vacation experience at the destination most recently visited. Responses were analyzed and coded by three judges in order to classify the visited destinations according to Plog's typology. Plog's instrument was significantly correlated with actual (past) vacation experience ($r = .23$, $p < .05$). In addition, cross-validation of

Author(s) and Year	Tested Destination Choice	Study Samples	Results/Findings
			Plog's model was achieved through three different personality trait measures.
Jackson, White and Schmierer (2000)	Yes	College students in Australia.	Study participants (n=98) were asked to plan and describe their next vacation, and filled out a questionnaire about personality and motivations. Allocentric and psychocentric groups were compared with motivations and preferred destination types. The lack of correlation refuted Plog's notion that there is a direct link between psychographic classification of tourists and destination choice.
Plog (2002)	No	Annual travel survey to a panel of US consumers.	Used data from consumers (n=7,961) to study travel habits and characteristics, grouping them according to the venturesomeness continuun. Compared psychographic traits with some demographic variables commonly used in the travel industry. Results provided evidence that Plog's psychographics are better predictors of tourist behavior on leisure trips than is household income.
Chandler and Costello (2002)	No	Visitors at three heritage tourism destinations in East Tennessee.	Using Plog's psychographic instrument, study participants (n=412) were grouped according to their responses to their lifestyle, activity level, and demographic characteristics. Consistent with Plog's model of venturesomeness, results evidenced homogeneous psychographic profiles at the three heritage locations in the study.
Litvin (2006)	Yes	Respondents in Singapore who had taken vacations.	Participants (n=290) were asked about their most recent vacation, as well as their ideal preferred vacation. Vacation narratives were analyzed and coded by five judges in order to classify respondents and tourism destinations according to Plog's typology. Findings indicate that although the model was not able to predict actual (past) destination choice, it was highly effective in suggesting ideal destination choice.

Author(s) and Year	Tested Destination Choice	Study Samples	Results/Findings
Liu, Siguaw and Enz (2008)	No	U.S. travelers who had taken vacations in Costa Rica.	Travel preferences, habits, and socio-demographic characteristics of tourists (n=116) were analyzed to identify profiles according to Plog's typology. In addition, tourists' profiles were associated with the destination's degree of development. Results showed psychographic consistencies with the venturesomeness continuum and the type of destination as suggested by Plog.
Weaver (2012)	No	Visitors to a protected area in South Carolina	Classified respondents (n=976) according to Plog's typology dimensions, associating them with various attitudes and behaviors as visitors to a natural area. Most participants (89%) showed allocentric characteristics, providing qualified support for the psychographic model within a relatively undeveloped protected area setting.
George, Henthorne, and Williams (2013)	Yes	Visitors to various destinations in India.	Interviewed tourists (n=293) at destinations with different degrees of development with reference to the tourism area life cycle (TALC). Respondents were classified according to the allocentrism-psychocentrism continuum. Multinomial logistic regression analysis showed that while psychocentrics largely prefer mature destinations, allocentrics prefer nascent and declining destinations.
Park and Jang (2014)	No	Visitors to a spa destination in South Korea.	Classified tourists (n=209) according to their psychographic profiles, and measured satisfaction with destination and revisit intention. Analysis of variance showed that unsatisfied allocentrics had lower revisit intentions than unsatisfied psychocentrics, which is consistent with Plog. However, revisit intention of allocentrics did not differ from psychocentrics when both types were satisfied.
Litvin and Smith (2016)	Yes	Travel survey to a large-scale panel of US consumers.	Respondents of a large scale survey (n=44,500) were classified according to the venturesomeness concept's profiles using Plog's original scale. The psychographic characteristics of venturesomeness were confirmed according to a normal distribution. However, findings showed that the Plog's

Author(s) and Year	Tested Destination Choice	Study Samples	Results/Findings
			construct was not able to predict actual (past) choice of destinations, since most travelers reported visitation to destinations classified as psychocentric, regardless of their degree of venturesomeness.

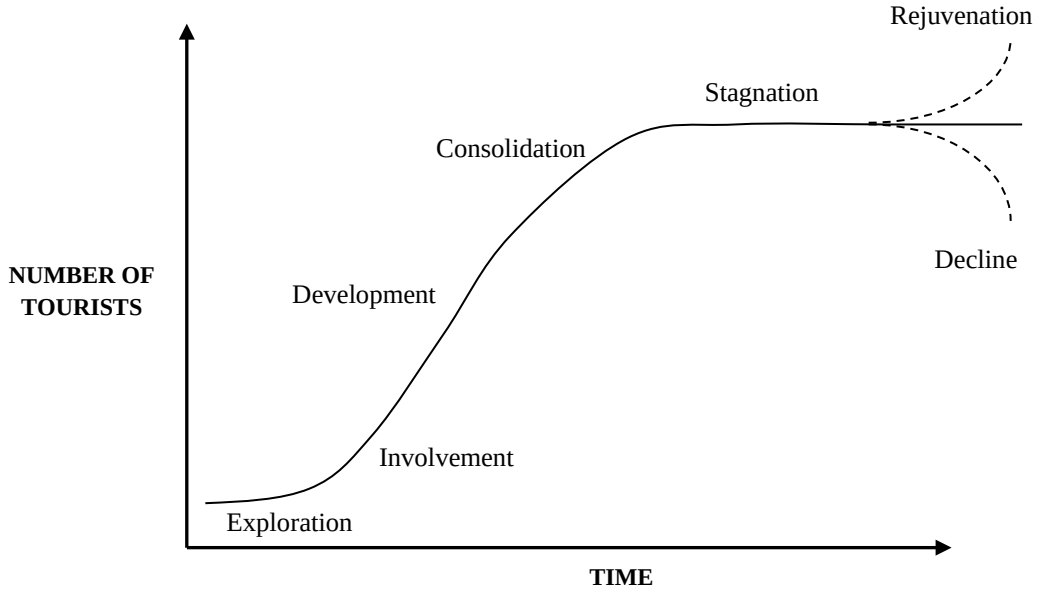
The degree of development of tourism destinations is a variable which is considered a pull factor, because potential travelers may be attracted to a destination depending on the tourism infrastructure, attractions, services, and amenities available at the destination. In this regard, the study by George, Henthorne, and Williams (2013) made reference to the model defined by Butler (1980) as a pull-factor to analyze destination choice as determined by Plog's (1974) push factors, but without extending them or testing any additional theoretical framework to contribute with new insights to explain the ability of venturesomeness to predict destination choice.

The correspondence between Plog´s (1974) typology and Butler´s (1980) TALC stages depicted in Figure 1 has been also been theoretically acknowledged by other scholars (Cooper, 1992; Cooper and Jackson, 1989; Dolnicar and Ring, 2014; Gale and Botterill, 2005; Gnoth, 1997; Gordon and Goodall, 1992; Keller, 1987; McKercher, 2005). However, as suggested by the various models in the literature reviewed previously, an attempt to study destination choice without taking into consideration other motivational factors would be incomplete in explaining tourist behavior and preference. Thus, this research studies Plog´s degree of venturesomeness as the variable representing push factors and the destination's degree of development as a variable that encompasses pull factors, while incorporating other theoretical frameworks in order to better understand destination choice. The stages in Butler's TALC are explained next.

Butler´s TALC Stages

One of the most widely-established models in tourism research is the tourism area life cycle (TALC) proposed by Butler (1980), which constitutes a way of looking at destination pull factors. Informed by studies in tourism and geography (Christaller, 1964; Noronha, 1976; Stansfield, 1978), and in the product life cycle concept in marketing (Catry and Chevalier, 1974; Levitt, 1965; Polli and Cook, 1969), the TALC categorizes destinations depending on variations in their pattern of growth and popularity among tourists. Specifically, Butler identifies a cycle of evolution for destinations, composed of six stages with different degrees of development and characteristics as shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5. Tourism Area Life Cycle (TALC) Model



Adapted from Butler (1980, 2006)

In the first stage, exploration, tourists initially visit a new area in small numbers because it is not yet popular among travelers and the access and tourist infrastructure is still incipient, which makes the destination novel for the overall market. As more tourist infrastructure is provided and marketing and promotion activities increase, the awareness and numbers of visitors

grow, then the area goes through successive phases of involvement, development, and consolidation, making it more well-known to tourists. The destination eventually becomes widely popular with a well-established image that attracts mainly mass tourism, entering into a stagnation stage as growth rates are slower than before, partly because the area has lost its novelty and unique atmosphere. Sometimes the destination moves into a phase of decline or rejuvenation, depending on the success of the efforts taken by the destination´s stakeholders in repositioning the destination to tourists.

According to Benckendorff and Zehrer (2013), "Butler's seminal work in applying the product lifecycle to destinations has been one of the most influential" in the travel and tourism literature (p. 139). The aspects investigated by scholars about the TALC have mainly focused on the measurement of its stages and the factors that influence destination growth (Ma and Hassink, 2013). Some researchers have been concerned with the temporal length of each stage in the model, its applicability to all tourism destinations, as well as its usefulness for predicting changes in destinations from a geographical standpoint (Lagiewski, 2006; Prideaux, 2000). Nevertheless, the TALC provides a valuable heuristic, descriptive tool for analyzing the historical development of destinations and the evolution of their major markets (Cooper and Jackson, 1989; Douglas, 1997; Russell and Faulkner, 2004). According to Papatheodorou (2006), the TALC constitutes a simple, yet serious conceptual framework which combines features of demand with elements of supply associated with the evolutionary patterns of destinations.

As depicted in Figure 1, Butler (1980) contends that the tourist types as defined by Plog´s (1974) allocentric-psychocentric continuum should be attracted to destinations with characteristics that match those in the TALC model. Specifically, the types of tourists are assumed to change as the destination evolves along the TALC "beginning with small numbers of

adventuresome *allocentrics*, followed by increasing numbers of *mid-centrics* as the area becomes accessible, better serviced, and well known," and finally appealing to "*psychocentrics* as the area becomes older, more outdated, and less different to the areas of origin of visitors" (Butler, 1980, p. 6, emphasis added). Nevertheless, further market research studies about the TALC should be conducted examining the way the travelers change as the destination evolves (Butler, 1993).

Tourism and marketing researchers for several years have discussed the validity of various conceptual aspects of Plog´s (1974) typology and the TALC. According to McKercher (2005), these two models "are arguably, the two most cited works in literature" related to travel and tourism (p. 50). Liu, Siguaw and Enz (2008) noted that further research over Plog´s model should follow "so as to test the Butler (1980) life cycle, thereby allowing a comparison between the two frameworks" to ascertain "whether different locations generate the same reactions" from Plog´s types of travelers (p. 277).

According to Butler (2009), studying the attributes of a destination which are most desirable to consumers is crucial to maintaining market appeal and attracting visitors. However, few studies of the TALC from the perspective of marketing and its implications exist to date, which suggests the need to better understand the effects of destination development and its relationship with psychographic types of tourists and overall preference shifts (Kozak and Martin, 2012; Singh, 2011). As suggested by Haywood (1986), this can be done by identifying the "relevant markets" in each stage of destination evolution, according to the destination characteristics sought by various tourist segments. Thus, Plog's (1974) model is appropriate to define the psychographic characteristics of those "relevant markets" and their preferences for different destination as defined by the Butler's (1980) TALC.

In the next section, previous studies testing Plog's (1974) model as predictive of destination choice are reviewed. In response to the weak findings in those studies, it is proposed that the prediction of the venturesomeness construct can be enhanced by taking into consideration other psychological constructs that drive tourists' decisions towards visiting destination along the TALC stages.

Enhancing the Prediction of Psychographics

As pointed out by Basala and Klenosky (2001), research about Plog´s (1974) model have so far resulted in varying degrees of support. The study by Williams, Ellis and Daniels (1986) was one of the earliest published works that corroborated the validity of Plog's model, reporting correlation coefficients between .50 and .76 in assessing participants´ preferences for visiting destinations. Similarly, Griffith and Albanese (1996) found support for the predictive power of venturesomeness, but their study yielded regression coefficients under .30. Litvin (2006) studied travelers' reported destination preferences along the allocentrism-psychocentrism continuum and found evidence of the model's effectiveness in suggesting the places travelers would like to visit.

More recently, George, Henthorne, and Williams (2013) used a logistic regression model to assess the match between Plog's (1974) typology and Butler's (1980) TALC stages. The findings revealed a pattern supporting the match, showing that the model's overall prediction of correct classified observations was 36.5 percent. Throughout the years other works have used different personality measures to predict tourist behavior (Ariffin, Ahmad, and Ishak, 2008; Frew and Shaw, 1999; Li and Tsai, 2013; Passafaro et al., 2015; Reisinger and Mavondo, 2004, 2005), but their results have also yielded small effects, as has been common for personality research in consumer behavior (Buss, 1989; Kassarjian, 1971; Kassarjian and Sheffet, 1991).

According to Allport (1960), the study of behavior in relation to personality should take into account the attitudes and motivations of the individual. Thus, the inconclusive results of Plog's personality-based model suggest that its predictive validity could be improved by looking into approaches that take into consideration other motivational factors that affect tourist decision making (Chon and Sparrowe, 2000; Cooper et al., 1998; Frew, 2000; Goeldner and Ritchie, 2003; McCabe, 2000; Pearce and Packer, 2013). Pizam and Calantone (1987) noted that researchers should go beyond the use of psychographics to explain tourist's vacation preferences and behavior. Similarly, in a critique of current practices in marketing research, Yankelovich and Meer (2006) recommend to focus more on consumer's needs, rather than on their personality-based psychographic traits alone.

Needs are defined as physiological or psychological requirements for the well-being of a person (Merriam-Webster, 2014). Respectively, these have been referred to as "lower" and "higher" needs, exerting a powerful influence on people's acts and behavior (Maslow, 1954). According to Sheth and Mittal (2004), the needs that people have in consumption situations are defined by their psychographic traits. For instance, some people play golf to fulfill a need to seek affiliation or peer approval, but such need can be traced back to an enduring psychographic trait which is what ultimately "drives customer behavior toward buying golf equipment or doing whatever is needed to implement that particular psychographic", so the psychographic "becomes motivational" (Sheth and Mittal, 2004, p. 176). This suggests that psychographic traits are antecedents of needs, which in turn determine the behavior of consumers.

Therefore, the influence of psychographics on destination choice could be better explained by studying the mediation of needs. From a behavioral research standpoint, mediating constructs are helpful in explaining consumer decision making, since they can provide a better

understanding of how some phenomena are processed "in-the-head" of people and account for their behavior (Baron and Kenny, 1986; Kerlinger and Lee, 2000). The mediating role of needs is consistent with the buyer behavior model proposed by Howard and Sheth (1969), in which personality-related traits are antecedents of consumer´s motives. These motives, also referred to as needs, determine the choice for products and services that satisfy specific wants. As pointed out by Howard and Sheth (1969): "personality traits represent motive content, so we postulate that personality traits *affect* motives" (p. 77, emphasis added).

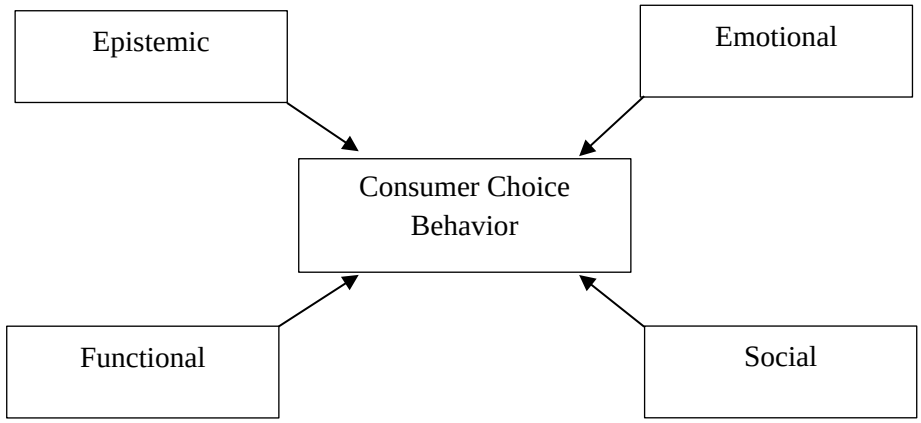
In the context of tourism decision making, the directionality from personality traits to needs has also been acknowledged in the literature. Similarly to the Howard-Sheth (1969) model, Schmoll (1977) proposed a general travel decision process in which tourists' needs are determined by personality features. Reisinger and Mavondo (2004) found significant effects in a model where tourist needs mediate the relationship between personality traits and vacation preferences. Thus, because personality influences the development of needs for vacation travel (McGuiggan, 2003), it is feasible to propose that the relationship between Plog´s (1974) personality-based venturesomeness and destination choice will be mediated by various consumer needs. This is in line with new theoretical approaches suggested in tourism motivation, in which research models take into account "multi-motive drivers of tourist behaviour" and are able "to function as integrative and predictive" (Pearce and Packer, 2013, p. 390). A multi-motive theory integrated with Plog's personality-based psychographic model is presented next.

Sheth, Newman and Gross' Consumption Needs

The consumption needs outlined in the theory of market choice behavior (Sheth, Newman and Gross, 1991a, 1991b) may serve as intervening variables to explain destination choice, depending on the particular epistemic, emotional, functional, and social needs possessed

by tourists (Denys and Mendes, 2014; Tapachai and Waryszak, 2000). The theory by Sheth, Newman and Gross evolved from the Howard-Sheth (1969) framework, but was specifically "developed to explain why consumers make the choices they do" (Sheth, Newman and Gross, 1991b, p. 159). The four consumption needs are depicted in Figure 6.

Figure 6. Consumption Needs in the Theory of Market Choice Behavior



Adapted from Sheth, Newman and Gross (1991a, 1991b)

The consumption needs in theory of the market choice behavior have been shown as determinants of attitudes and choice in more than 200 consumption situations (Sheth, Newman and Gross, 1991b), and have been employed as mediating constructs to study purchase behavior (Kim et al., 2002; Long and Schiffman, 2000; Pope, 1998; Xiao and Kim, 2009). Therefore, this research contends that assessing the role of the various consumption needs as consequence of tourists' enduring psychographic traits could provide a more complete understanding of destination choice. This is consistent with the stance of Pearce and Lee (2005), who point out that travel motivation may occur in a pattern of multiple needs rather than in a single dominant force.

Following Tapachai and Waryszak (2000) and Denys and Mendes (2014), the influence of consumption needs on destination choice can also be studied by examining the benefits that

tourists believe will obtain by traveling to a given destination, based on the extent to which such benefits will fulfill the needs. Sánchez et al. (2006) identified benefits in the purchase of tourism products according to perceived value dimensions on the basis of the theory by Sheth, Newman, and Gross (1991a, 1991b). Similarly, Johar and Sirgy (1995) studied various segments of travelers and found that the benefits expected at a destination are better predictors of destination choice than psychographics and life-style variables. This suggests that operationalizing consumption needs as benefits that tourists expect to satisfy by visiting a destination might offer additional insights into tourist's decision making. In other words, the analysis of consumption needs alone, without taking into account the cognitive evaluations about the value or outcomes expected by visiting a destination may provide only a partial, limited understanding of the influence exerted by consumption needs. Thus, in order to better observe the ampler effects of consumption needs this research follows an expectancy-value approach to assess their influence on destination choice. This can be done by looking at the degree of congruity between a tourist's consumption needs and the expectation that such needs may be satisfied at the destination.

In sum, this research proposes and tests a mediation model that competes with the direct, non-mediated model that has been tested in previous research using the psychographic construct developed by Plog (1974, 2002). In doing so, it is expected that taking into consideration the effects of consumption needs will provide a greater explanatory power of venturesomeness on tourists' destination choice. The theoretical framework under which the hypothesized relations will be investigated is shown next.

Theoretical Framework of the Research

This research is framed under a theoretical framework that provides the support to investigate the decision-making process that occurs when tourists consider selecting destinations

for vacation. First, this research is based on the theory of planned behavior (TPB) developed and extended in the field of psychology (Ajzen, 1985, 1991; Ajzen and Fishbein, 1977, 1980; Fishbein and Ajzen,1975). TPB provides the theoretical support to examine the role of psychographics and consumption needs as antecedents of tourists' attitudes and behavioral intentions. The investigation will also be conducted drawing from the activation theory by Fiske and Maddi (1961), which is useful to explain the effect of personality-based psychographics on people's behavior. Finally, destination choice as a function of the expectation that consumption needs will be fulfilled by visiting a given destination is supported by congruity theory (Malhotra, 1988; Onkvisit and Shaw, 1987; Osgood and Tannenbaum, 1955; Sirgy, 1982, 1983).

Theory of Planned Behavior

Based on TPB, behavioral intentions such as purchase likelihood can be predicted by assessing consumers' attitudes and beliefs towards products. Attitudes are evaluative responses that people hold towards objects, based on exposure or knowledge of their attributes and characteristics (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1977). In turn, "intentions are assumed to capture the motivational factors that influence a behavior" (Ajzen, 1991, p. 181). In the context of consumer decision making, TPB has been employed to frame the process by which people form attitudes and behavioral intentions toward products and services, by considering their salient beliefs about available alternatives (Ryan and Bonfieid, 1975, 1980; Sanbonmatsu and Fazio, 1990). According to Lawson (2000), TPB provides marketing researchers with an operationalizable way of investigating and modeling consumer behavior as related to evaluations and preferences. Further, TPB takes into consideration both, cognitive and affective components as determinants of attitudes (Ajzen, 2001).

By focusing on attitude toward behavior, TPB can help in assessing consumers' perception of the consequences of using a product (Donavan, Minor, and Mowen, 2016). TPB is applicable to tourist behavior in that the attitudes that people hold toward a particular destination will likely affect their behavioral intention to travel to the destination in the future (Lee, 2009). For example, attitudes as a predictor of behavior was used in research conducted by Goodrich (1978), revealing that the more favorable the perception of a given destination, the greater the likelihood of choosing it for a vacation over other less favorably perceived destinations. Similarly, by employing TPB to investigate choice for leisure activities, the study of Ajzen and Diver (1992) confirmed that attitudes are able to predict intentions, which in turn antecede actual behavior. Lam and Hsu (2004, 2006) and Pestana Barros, Butler, and Correia (2008) also found the theory useful for studying destination choice processes, and more recently Hsu and Huang (2012) demonstrated its utility in analyzing tourists' motivations to visit a destination.

As noted by Jackson, White and Schmierer (2000) and Litvin (2006), research employing Plog's (1974) model can be approached under Azjen and Fishbein's framework because the purchase of vacation travel requires time, arrangements, and the investment of physical and psychic energy, which are the result of a reasoned action and planned behavior influenced by personality and attitudes. According to Shavitt (1990), focusing on the link between attitudes, intentions, and behavior can be useful to gain insights about the specific motives that are served by those attitudes. By distinguishing needs differences among tourist segments, the way in which push factors account for variations in behavioral intentions to visit a given destination on vacations can be examined under TPB. Therefore, because intentions to visit a destination are based on consumers´ appraisals of the attributes of various alternatives in their consideration sets, TPB is suitable to study the influence of pull factors on behavioral attitudes.

Activation Theory

Personality has been defined as "the set of psychological traits and mechanisms within the individual that are organized and relatively enduring and that influence his or her interactions with, and adaptations to, the intrapsychic, physical, and social environments" (Larsen and Buss, 2005, p. 4). According to Vukasović and Bratko (2015), the dominant theoretical perspective in the past decades follows the trait perspective, based on the premise that a person possesses a small number of relatively stable personality dimensions. The concept of venturesomeness proposed by Plog (1974) is based on dominant personality traits of allocentrism-psychocentrism, which are enduring and stable across situations, and can be helpful in explaining consumer choice and decision making (Foxall and Goldsmith, 1988). The effect of Plog's psychographic traits on decision making is also consistent with the activation theory by Fiske and Maddi (1961), which maintains that personality-related characteristics determine the level of activation or excitement, alertness, or energy of people. Under Fiske and Maddi's theory, people engage in behavior that is consistent with their customary levels of activation, since doing so will allow them to experience a state of well-being (Maddi, 1996). Thus, the study of the relationship between tourist traits and behavioral intentions can be framed under activation theory, as applied to the choice of vacation destination. As shown by the research of Nickerson and Ellis (1991), the dimensions in Plog's model are supported by Fiske and Maddi´s theory, and justified in explaining destination selection.

Congruity Theory

The idea that how well a destination's perceived attributes will satisfy travelers' needs will determine destination selection is framed under the principle of congruity proposed in communication studies (Osgood and Tannenbaum, 1955) and developed in marketing and

consumer research (Sirgy, 1982, 1983). Congruity refers to a psychological matching process in which a perception is compared to an evoked referent cognition with the purpose of evaluating a stimulus object or action, which in turn produces a motivational state leading to behavior (Chon and Olsen, 1991). Congruity theory supports the image congruency hypothesis, which posits that consumers will select products that correspond to their self-concepts, because the image they have of themselves matches the user image of that product (Aguirre-Rodriguez, Bosnjak, and Sirgy, 2012; Kressmann et al., 2006; Malhotra, 1988; Onkvisit and Shaw, 1987; Sirgy et al., 2008). A product-user image is the generalized stereotype of the users of a given product, providing the perception that the product is able to satisfy their specific needs or wants (Sirgy et al, 1997). According to Hung and Petrick (2012), congruity theory can be applied to assess tourists' intentions to visit a destination by bridging the gap between push and pull factors.

The congruency hypothesis can be appropriately used within the framework of TPB, which is based on the expectancy-value paradigm and has been widely applied in consumer research (Bagozzi, 1984a, 1985). Under an expectancy-value attitude model, product-related beliefs constitute the basis on which alternatives in a consideration set are evaluated, forming intentions to try or purchase a product as a function of the level of confidence consumers have in that it will provide an expected value. According to Bagozzi (1981) and Smith and Swinyard (1983), the studies conducted under the Fishbein and Ajzen model are able to better predict intentions when expectancy-value attitudes are measured with reference to the perceived outcomes or consequences of an action. Therefore, as suggested by Sirgy and Tyagi (1986) and Sirgy and Johar (1992), this study contends that congruity research and expectancy-value theories such as TPB can be merged into a single nomological network, by looking at congruity as the psychological process that mediates the relationship between attitudes and behavior.

The proposed mediation of consumption needs is consistent with TPB (Ajzen, 1991) in the sense that the influence of personality in human behavior is greatly attenuated by the presence of various other psychological factors. According to that perspective, "personality traits have an impact on specific behaviors *only indirectly* by influencing some of the factors that are *more closely linked* to the behavior in question" (Ajzen, 1991, p. 181, emphasis added). Similarly, the metatheoretic model of motivation and personality (3M model) of Mowen (2000) considers the mediation of consumers' needs between personality traits and behavior by making reference to expected, anticipated outcomes. Thus, destination selection can be better explained through the intervening effects of tourists' consumption needs and the anticipated level of congruity in satisfying those needs at the destination, as hypothesized in the following section.

Research Hypotheses

Based on works that have empirically tested Plog's (1974) model, destination choice can be predicted to be a function of the venturesomeness construct. For example, research by Williams, Ellis and Daniels (1986) found that allocentric tourists have a higher preference for destinations such as a primitive South Pacific island, while psychocentric tourists have a higher preference for places such as major amusement parks. Griffith and Albanese (1996) showed that allocentrics are more prone to choose destinations classified as novel or non-touristy, midcentrics tend to prefer destinations in a moderate level of tourism development, and psychocentrics are more likely to choose destinations that are heavily commercialized, with high quality hotels and restaurants. Research by Litvin (2006) found Plog's model as robust and highly effective in suggesting which destinations travelers would ideally like to visit on vacations. More recently, George, Henthorne, and Williams (2013) distinguished segments of tourists vacationing at

destinations in different TALC stages on the basis of Plog's psychographic typology, consistent with the prediction by Butler (1980).

However, not all works testing Plog's (1974) model have supported the venturesomeness concept as a tool to predict destination choice. For instance, the two studies conducted by Lee-Hoxter and Lester (1987, 1988) did not corroborate the relationship between psychographics and type of preferred destination as predicted in Plog's model. Research findings reported by Smith (1990a, 1990b) did not show a correlation between Plog's tourist typology and the destinations visited by travelers. Similarly, Jackson, White and Schmierer (2000) found no support for a linkage between the degree of venturesomeness of tourists and their destination choice as suggested by Plog.

In a number of rejoinders and commentary articles, Plog (1990, 1991a, 2006) argued that the reason for conflicting results was that researchers failed to employ the scale he created to specifically measure the venturesomeness construct. As a matter of fact, neither Lee-Hoxter and Lester (1987, 1988), Smith (1990a), or Jackson, White, and Schmierer (2000) used the instrument that was originally developed by Plog. This research overcomes the limitation of those works by employing an original venturesomeness scale, providing a better assessment of Plog's model predictive power. In addition, it will be possible to gain some insights about the nomological validity of Plog's model and its original scale by examining its relationship with the TALC model. Therefore, the correspondence between Plog's psychographic model and Butler's (1980) TALC depicted in Figure 1 is revisited in this research by advancing the following hypothesis:

H1: The effect of venturesomeness on intention to visit a novel destination will be positive and stronger than the effect of venturesomeness on intention to visit a mature destination.

As noted previously, it has been suggested that in addition to personality-based psychographics, the process of destination choice is influenced by other motivational constructs (Chon and Sparrowe, 2000; Cooper et al., 1998; Frew, 2000; Goeldner and Ritchie, 2003; McCabe, 2000; Pearce and Packer, 2013). Therefore, this investigation focuses on proposing a model in which tourists' preferences are not only a function of the direct effects of Plog's (1974) venturesomeness, but are also a function of the mediation effects of various consumption needs. Because this research is conducted employing the expectancy-value attitudinal framework of TPB (Ajzen, 1991, 2001; Ajzen and Fishbein, 1977), the role of consumption needs can be better assessed by operationalizing them as benefits that tourists expect to fulfill by visiting a destination. This purpose can be accomplished by identifying the extent to which tourists perceive that a destination will provide the benefits that match their consumption needs.

The marketing literature shows that consumers' attitudes and decisions are determined by the perception of value corresponding to the dimensions outlined in the theory of market choice behavior (Fandos Roig et al., 2006; Smith and Colgate, 2007; Sweeney and Soutar, 2001; Wang et al., 2004; Wiedmann, Hennigs, and Siebels, 2009). In the context of tourism, Tapachai and Waryszak (2000) and Denys and Mendes (2014) studied the benefits associated with the image of destinations organized according to epistemic, emotional, functional, and social needs, showing that the congruence between those needs and the perceived image of a destination influence consumer's attitudes. Also, Bosnjak et al. (2011) tested a congruity model in a tourism

destination context and found that visitors´ loyalty judgments are largely determined by the fulfillment of the needs (or need congruity) specified by Sheth, Newman, and Gross (1991a).

Thus, because congruity theory is applicable to the study of tourism destination choice (Sirgy and Su, 2000), this work investigates need congruity as an *anticipated* expectation that consumption needs will be satisfied by traveling to a given destination. This anticipated belief, referred to as anticipated need congruity, is hypothesized to intervene in the relationship of Plog´s (1974) venturesomeness and intentions to visit destinations along the TALC (Butler, 1980). In the following section, the research hypotheses for the proposed mediation are presented, describing how the venturesomeness construct should affect destination preference through the mediation effects of Sheth, Newman, and Gross' (1991a) consumption needs

Epistemic Needs and Higher Venturesomeness

According to Sheth, Newman, and Gross (1991a), some products address people´s epistemic needs because of "their capacity to provide novelty, arouse curiosity, and/or satisfy knowledge-seeking aspirations" (p. 62). These needs related to the search for novelty and variety have long been recognized in the literature as influential in consumer´s behavior and decision making (Baumgartner and Steenkamp, 1996; Hirschman, 1980; Kahn, Kalwani, and Morrison, 1986; Manning, Bearden, and Madden, 1995; McAlister and Pessemier, 1982; Raju, 1980; Roehrich, 2004; Steenkamp and Baumgartner, 1992). Epistemic needs are reflected in people's exploratory purchase behavior, and can be motivated by goal-striving personalities that lead consumers into "buying something out of curiosity or because of a desire for variety" (Baumgartner, 2002, p. 289).

In the tourism context, epistemic needs are understood as the desire for novelty, variety, and strangeness that people seek in certain kinds of tourism experiences (Cohen, 1972, 1979).

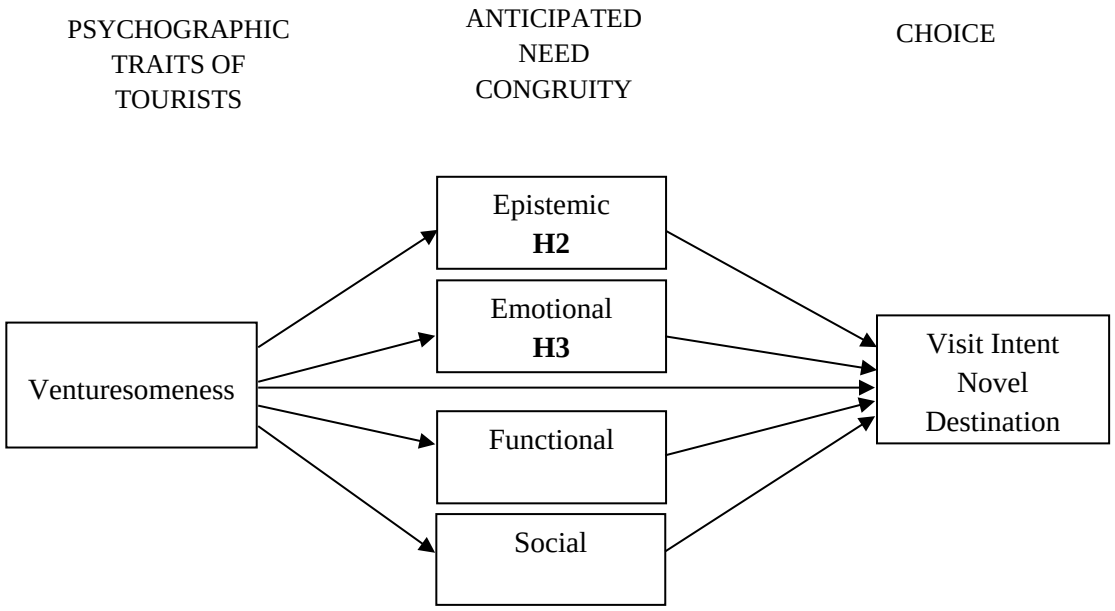
Lee and Crompton (1992) conceptualized novelty seeking as the need for thrill, change from routine, boredom alleviation, or surprise obtained from travel, showing that the construct can be used to predict destination preferences. Research by Bello and Etzel (1985) reported that novelty-seeking is associated with the educational dimensions of a trip, and Lepp and Gibson (2008) and Jiang, Scott, and Ding (2015) found that need for novelty and knowledge are major determinants in travelers´ style and destination choice. In addition, Cha, McCleary and Uysal (1995) and Mo, Havitz and Howard (1994) showed that consumers can be segmented according to their degree of novelty sought in order to predict their behavior as tourists.

With respect to Plog´s (1974) typology, tourists with higher venturesomeness, or allocentrics, like to go to destinations where learning and discovery play a major role, because they "want to experience the novelty of the area before it loses its uniqueness" (Plog, 1991b, p. 68). According to Plog (1990), allocentrics are intellectually curious people preferring travel to underdeveloped destinations, "especially to exotic or very unique destination areas" (p. 43), and are "more likely to go off of the "beaten path" to explore the unique and unusual" (p. 45). Tourists with higher levels of venturesomeness tend to choose "relatively unknown and uncommon destinations" where they can "discover the unexpected sights, sounds" or "unique cultures" on site (Plog, 1995, p. 33). This psychographic description suggests that the extent to which epistemic needs can be potentially satisfied plays a decisive role in where allocentrics vacation. If so, then anticipated epistemic congruity would likely mediate the relationship of venturesomeness and destination preference for novel, undeveloped destinations along the TALC (Butler, 1980). Thus, as depicted in Figure 7, the following relationships are hypothesized:

H2a: The mediation effects of anticipated epistemic congruity will increase the explanation power of venturesomeness on intention to visit a novel destination.

H2b: Anticipated epistemic congruity will have a stronger effect on the intention to visit a novel destination than anticipated functional and social congruity.

Figure 7. Hypothesized Effects of Epistemic and Emotional Needs



Emotional Needs and Higher Venturesomeness

Based on Sheth, Newman, and Gross (1991a), a given product may satisfy emotional needs when it "precipitates" some "feelings or affective states" in consumers (p. 55). The influence of emotional values, feelings, and affect have been widely discussed and studied in the marketing and consumer research literature (Babin, Darden and Griffin, 1994; Bagozzi, Gopinath, and Nyer, 1999; Hirschman and Holbrook, 1982; Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982; Lofman, 1991; Shiv and Fedorikhin, 1999; Westbrook, 1987; Voss, Spangenberg, and Grohmann, 2003). Emotional needs are manifest in consumers' hedonic purchase behavior when

they buy products just because they like them, because the products provide pleasure, or because consumers feel good about using them (Baumgartner, 2002).

In the tourism literature, emotional needs are related to feelings of pleasure, excitement, or relaxation with influence on destination choice processes (Goossens, 2000). Pike and Ryan (2004) and Lin et al. (2007) empirically studied the affective components perceived at various destinations to show that pleasure, arousal, excitement, or relaxation are determinants of tourists' destination preference and choice. Jiang, Scott, and Ding (2015) identified pleasure derived from natural beauty and scenery at destinations as a key driver for tourists to travel. Research by Kwortnik and Ross (2007) also found that emotions play a major role in the planning, decision making, and selection of experiential products in the context of vacations. Bigné and Andreu (2004) conducted market segmentation based on emotions, demonstrating that tourists with greater positive emotions display favorable behavioral intentions, such as higher levels of loyalty and willingness to pay more at tourism attractions. Similarly, Hosany and Prayag (2013) segmented tourists according to their emotional profiles and found that the degree of joy and positive surprise evoked by a destination had an impact on the evaluation of the destination.

According to Plog (2002), tourists higher in venturesomeness prefer taking vacations at destinations that offer opportunities to experience emotions, reaching out to the world "with anticipation and excitement" (p. 246). For this type of allocentric traveler, "their fulfillment comes from gazing at the unspoiled beauty of the local scenery", which provides them "a sense of excitement" about the area (Plog, 1991b, p. 78). Allocentrics tend to choose destinations where they can feel freedom, joy, happiness, or just something that "adds a sense of *joie d´vivre*" to their travel experiences (Plog, 1995, p. 33). Thus, there is a relationship between the level of venturesomeness and participation in activities that arouse emotions, both at home and while on

vacations (Plog, 2004), suggesting that the extent to which emotional needs are expected to be fulfilled determine where allocentrics vacation. If so, then anticipated emotional congruity would likely mediate the relationship of venturesomeness and destination selection of novel, undeveloped destinations along the TALC (Butler, 1980). Accordingly, as depicted in Figure 7, the following relationships are hypothesized:

H3a: The mediation effects of anticipated emotional congruity will increase the explanation power of venturesomeness on intention to visit a novel destination.

H3b: Anticipated emotional congruity will have a stronger effect on the intention to visit a novel destination than anticipated functional and social congruity.

Functional Needs and Lower Venturesomeness

According to Sheth, Newman, and Gross (1991a), the functional needs addressed by a product refer to "the utility that it is perceived to possess on criteria salient to its physical or functional purposes" (p. 32). The influence of functional or utilitarian needs on purchase decisions has been studied for years by marketing and consumer behavior researchers (Babin, Darden and Griffin, 1994; Bearden and Etzel, 1982; Brendl, Markman, and Messner, 2003; Johar and Sirgy, 1991; LeBoeuf and Simmons, 2010; Shavitt, 1990; Voss, Spangenberg, and Grohmann, 2003). Functional types of needs are reflected in people's purchase decision making, motivated by a goal-striving personality to make "a purchase based on objective, logical criteria and for utilitarian reasons" (Baumgartner, 2002, p. 289).

In the context of tourism, functional needs refer to the desire for performance-related attributes of tourist amenities, attractions, and infrastructure at a given destination. For example,

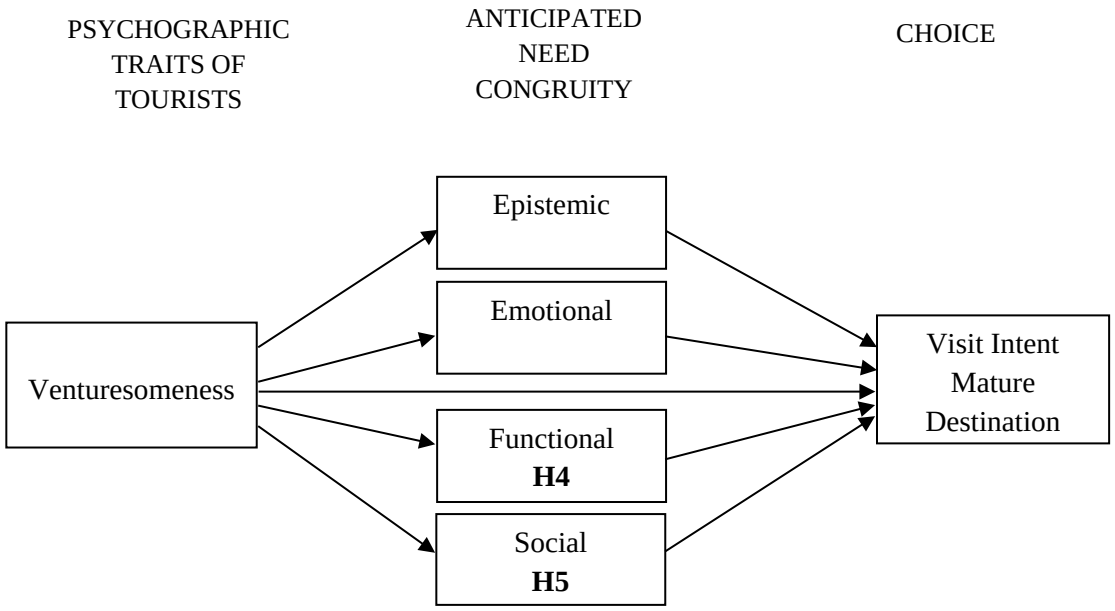
empirical research has found that perceived characteristics such as cleanliness, quality, and safety in accommodation, restaurant, and transportation facilities are among the most important supply-side determinants of destination choice (Hsu, Tsai, and Wu, 2009; Jang and Cai, 2002). Similarly, the study conducted by Apostolakis and Jaffry (2005) demonstrated that tourists evaluate positively the introduction of services and amenities that improve the quality of customer service in tourism destinations. In addition, Uysal and Jurowski (1994) showed that resort areas with widely available entertainment facilities are more likely to attract tourists for whom family activities and sports are important, compared to those with cultural or relaxation interests.

With respect to Plog´s (1974) typology, tourists with lower venturesomeness, or psychocentrics, tend to prefer destinations where the physical attributes, infrastructure, and facilities play a major role, because the "heavy commercial development provides evidence that the destination must be a good place for a vacation or else so many people wouldn't go there" (Plog, 1991b, p. 65). Accordingly, tourists with lower levels of venturesomeness like to go where they can find a "predictable quality for hotels and restaurants," as well as several entertainment facilities such as "golf courses, arcades, movie theaters, etc." (Plog, 1995, p. 35). This psychographic description suggests that the extent to which functional needs can be potentially satisfied plays an important role in where psychocentrics vacation. If so, then anticipated functional congruity would likely mediate the relationship of venturesomeness and destination preference for mature, developed destinations along the TALC (Butler, 1980). Thus, as depicted in Figure 8, the following relationships are hypothesized:

H4a: The mediation effects of anticipated functional congruity will increase the explanation power of venturesomeness on intention to visit a mature destination.

H4b: Anticipated functional congruity will have a stronger effect on the intention to visit a mature destination than anticipated epistemic and emotional congruity.

Figure 8. Hypothesized Effects of Functional and Social Needs



Social Needs and Lower Venturesomeness

Based on Sheth, Newman, and Gross (1991a), social needs can be satisfied by certain products that "are consumed visibly or publicly," according to their degree of "association with one or more distinctive" demographic, socioeconomic, or cultural groups that are "positively or negatively stereotyped" (p. 38). These needs, related to the expressiveness or symbolism of products, have also been widely recognized in the literature as crucial determinants in consumer behavior and decision making (Bearden and Etzel, 1982; Belk, 1988; Han, Nunes, and Drèze, 2010; Johar and Sirgy, 1991; Lam, 2012; LeBoeuf and Simmons, 2010; Richins, 1994; Shavitt,

1990; Torelli and Ahluwalia, 2012; Wilcox, Kim, and Sen, 2009). Social needs are manifest in consumers' symbolic purchase behavior as motivated by goal-striving personalities which influence consumers into "buying a brand to project a certain image or because it meets with social approval" (Baumgartner, 2002, p. 289).

In the tourism literature, social needs are those that are satisfied by symbolic, value-expressive, and identity-related attributes of destinations (Bond and Falk, 2013; Chon, 1992). Research by Litvin and Goh (2002), Beerli, Díaz Meneses, and Moreno Gil (2007), and Lewis, Kerr, and Pomering (2010), showed that tourists who perceive a destination as reflective of the type of person they are or aspire to be, will have greater intentions to visit that destination. Similarly, Simpson and Siguaw (2008) found that tourists who embrace a destination as part of their identity tend to have a higher loyalty, partly because of the social activities conducted at it. Other studies have demonstrated that tourists are able to associate personality dimensions with destinations, so the extent to which destinations are consistent with tourists' own personality and needs will be a determinant in the positive evaluations of the destinations (Ekinci and Hosany, 2006; Murphy , Benckendorff, and Moscardo, 2007; Murphy, Moscardo, and Benckendorff, 2007). Because of the social visibility of holiday travel, tourists who are concerned with how they are seen by others are likely to choose destinations which serve as means of self-expression (Josiassen and Assaf, 2013).

According to Plog (1995), tourists lower in venturesomeness prefer taking vacations at destinations that provide them with experiences through which they can project their identities, during and after the travel. In comparison to an allocentric, a psychocentric tends to be "much more of a social person" (p. 35), and chooses destinations where he or she can interact with many other tourists. For tourists with low level of venturesomeness, it is important to tell others

about the trips they have taken, so “there is a lot to talk about” right after they return home from vacations (Plog, 1995, p. 36). This suggests that travelers with high social needs are similar to psychocentrics, and the extent to which social needs are expected to be fulfilled determine where they vacation. If so, then anticipated social congruity would likely mediate the relationship of venturesomeness and destination selection of mature, developed destinations along the TALC (Butler, 1980). Accordingly, as depicted in Figure 8, the following relationships are hypothesized:

H5a: The mediation effects of anticipated social congruity will increase the explanation power of venturesomeness on intention to visit a mature destination.

H5b: Anticipated social congruity will have a stronger effect on the intention to visit a mature destination than anticipated epistemic and emotional congruity.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This research was conducted based on the epistemic and methodological approaches followed by other studies using Plog´s (1974) model, including works by Chandler and Costello (2002), Griffith and Albanese (1996), and Plog (2002). The research design consisted of empirically estimating the relationships between tourists´ psychographic characteristics, their predominant motives for travel, and their destination preferences. Inferential statistics techniques were employed to test the proposed model with the purpose of reaching an inductive-statistical explanation (Huck, 2012; Hunt, 2010; Kerlinger and Lee, 2000). The data to conduct the analysis was obtained through questionnaires in which respondents were presented a hypothetical scenario where they were to consider two destination alternatives for their next vacation.

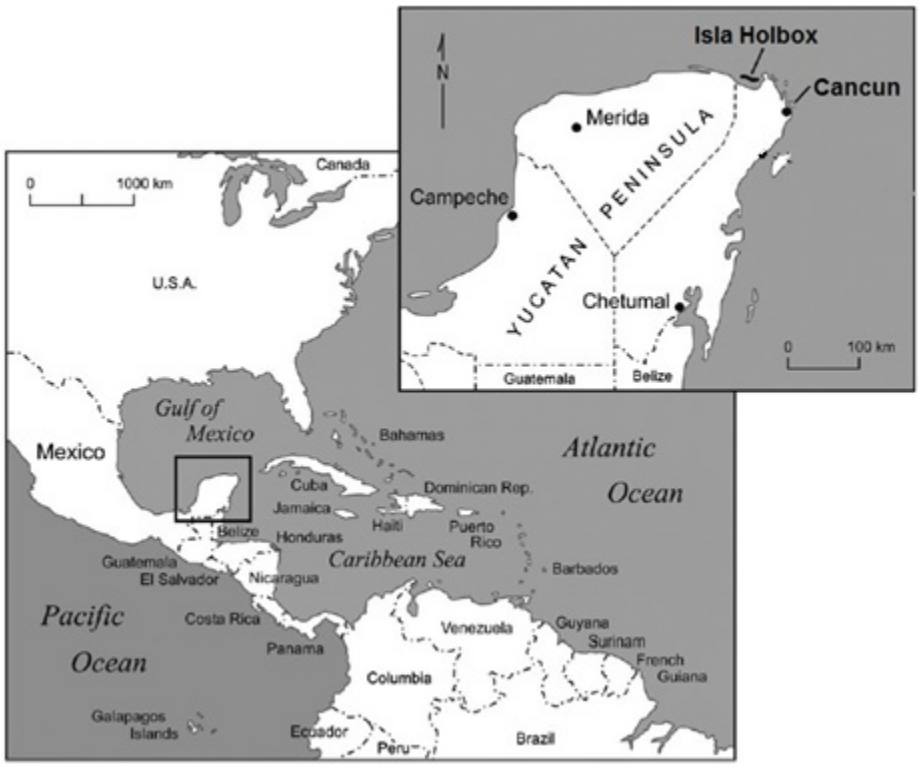
The two actual destinations included in the scenario are representative of the two extreme TALC stages of interest in this study: novel destinations in exploration/involvement, and mature destinations in stagnation/decline (Butler, 1980). Consistent with the original use of the TALC model in the context of resort areas (Butler, 2014), the destinations in the study consist of beach or "sun and sand" holiday destinations (Smith, 1992). The type of tourism based on sun, sand, and sea is popular around the world (Prebensen, Skallerud, and Chen, 2010), representing one of the largest, fastest growing, and most lucrative sector of the world's tourism industry (Honey and

Durham, 2013). Despite the emergence of other of kinds of leisure and vacation destinations, the popularity of beach resorts continues, serving as an appropriate setting to understand tourism area cycle and development (Aguiló, Alegre, and Sard, 2005; Papatheodorou, 2004).

Destinations in the Study

Two beach resort areas in Mexico´s Yucatan Peninsula served as the tourism destinations to be considered and evaluated by the participants of this research: the small Isla Holbox was included to represent a novel destination in the exploration/involvement stage, and Cancun was included to represent the type of mature destination in the stagnation/decline stage. These destinations are appropriate for this investigation because of their location in a region that has traditionally been accessible to tourists from the United States (Clancy, 1999; Lundberg, 1974; Oyewole, 2009; Truett and Truett, 1982), as can be seen in the map illustrated in Figure 9.

Figure 9. Map of Tourism Destinations in the Study



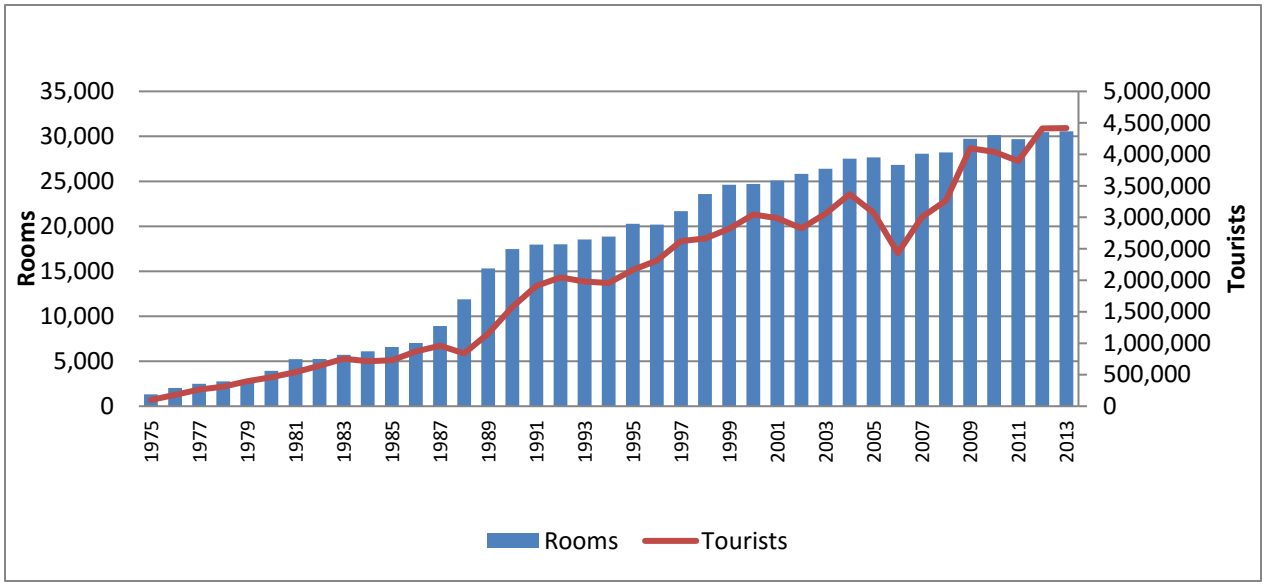
Adapted from Ziegler, Dearden, and Rollins (2012).

It was decided to employ a scenario with two destinations located within the same country as a way to reduce sources of extraneous variance that might influence the measurement of attitudes and preference of participants in the study. For example, because the two destinations are serviced by the same airport, which is the closest to them, there are no significant differences in terms of the flying distance required for travelers to get to the destinations. Also, the two resort areas share fundamentally the same natural features predominant in the northeastern coast of the Yucatan Peninsula, such as climate, physical terrain, type of beach, as well as vegetation and wildlife. What varies from one destination to another are the man-made offerings and infrastructure built to provide services to visitors, and the extent to which the destinations have grown and been commercialized to address tourists´ requirements. Therefore, at least from the perspective of pull factors, variations in preferences of potential tourists toward the destinations will be more likely derived from perceived differences in the degree of tourism development and the respective offerings at the resort areas, rather than from other supply-side factors.

The classification of destinations along the various TALC stages is supported by secondary data reflecting annual growth of hotel rooms supply and number of visitors to the destinations, which are the same classification variables employed in previous studies (Choy, 1992; Priestley and Mundet, 1998; Rosado-Varela and Medina-Argueta, 2014; Tooman, 1997). By looking at the historical patterns of hotel rooms built and tourists arrivals, the stages of development and popularity of the vacation resorts according to Butler´s (1980) model were identified. Thus, as shown in Figure 10, Cancun fits in the category of a destination that is in the latter stages of the TALC, since it is a tourism resort that has been known in the international tourism market for many decades. The destination area was part of a project planned by the

Mexican Federal Government and started to receive tourists in the early 1970s (Dunphy, 1972; FONATUR, 2010). Initially known as an expensive, exotic and exclusive spot for international 'jet-sets', Cancun eventually began to exhibit signs of overdevelopment and started to offer discounted packages to middle-class tourists, in an attempt to fill the exploding number of rooms (Torres, 2002). After 40 years, Cancun has grown in terms of hotel infrastructure and tourism arrivals, becoming the leading tourism resort area in Mexico (Torres and Nelson, 2008). Therefore, the destination´s pattern of development shows that it has reached a maturity phase that closely corresponds to Butler´s stagnation/decline stage (Murray, 2007).

Figure 10. Hotel Supply and Tourist Arrivals in Cancun

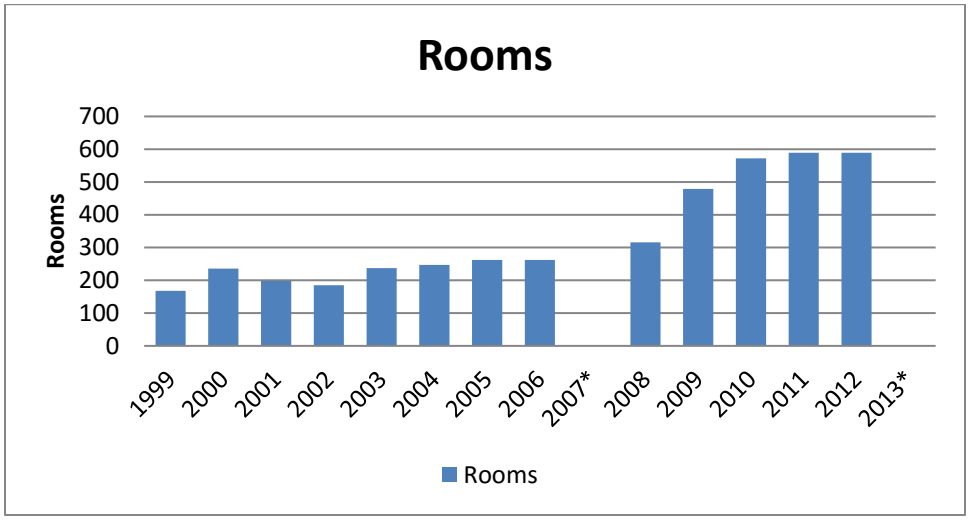


Data from the Cancun´s Tourism Barometer (Asociación de Hoteles de Cancún, 2014).

As shown in Figure 11, Isla Holbox fits into the category of the very early stage of development of tourism destinations. The island still has sand streets and was predominantly a fishing village until a few years ago when whale shark watching tours became popular to some visitors (Ziegler, Dearden, and Rollins, 2012). The destination is still so underdeveloped that only a few hundred hotel rooms are available, mostly in small family-owned hotels and lodgings.

No official records exist yet about the actual number of tourist arrivals per year. However, some partial, survey-based estimations by independent researchers suggest that roughly over 14,000 tourists visit Isla Holbox during the whale sharks watching season every summer, its busiest tourist season of the year (Zenteno, 2007). This hotel room and visitors data suggest that Isla Holbox is in Butler's (1980) exploration/involvement stage of the TALC.

Figure 11. Hotel Supply in Isla Holbox



Data from the Statistical Yearbook of Quintana Roo (INEGI, 2014). (*) No data was available for those years.

By looking at the growth patterns in the number of available hotel rooms and visitors per year, the location of the two destinations along the extremes of the TALC is substantiated. However, there are other destination characteristics that also give cues to consider in determining the destination's lifecycle position (Agarwal, 1997; Butler, 1980, 1991, 1993). For example, other indicators of Cancun's maturity stage are the pollution and environmental decay of some of its natural areas, lack of available land for further tourism growth, as well as a reliance on repetitive tourists (i.e., high number of time-share resorts). In addition, Isla Holbox's incipient positioning in the international tourism markets is one of the cues that situate it as an undeveloped, novel tourism destination (Miller Bouchet, 2016).

Similarly to the approach followed by Griffith and Albanese (1996) and Litvin (2006), the qualitative evaluation from independent judges familiar with the concepts in Butler´s (1980) model was sought in order to triangulate the classification of the two destinations. Five academicians who are acquainted with the destinations under study were asked to rank them according to the TALC's stages, based on a holistic assessment of the destinations' historical development and current position in the tourism market. The judges' evaluations corroborated that Isla Holbox is much younger as a tourism spot, while Cancun is an older, more mature resort in the evolution life cycle.

Sample

The target population for this research consists of consumers in the United States, since Plog´s (1974) model was originally developed in the context of North American travelers and, thus, its testing requires studying consumers in the same context (Plog, 1990, 1991a, 2006). In order to estimate the sample size, an a-priori sample size calculator for SEM models was employed (Soper, 2015), determining that at least 444 subjects are required to achieve a statistical power of .80, with 6 latent constructs, 43 indicators, moderate effects sizes, and a significance level of $p < .05$ (Cohen, 1988). Thus, a sample target of 450 subjects was established for this study, based on a stratified selection in terms of geography, household income, and age according to national census demographic distribution (Fowler, 2002; Huck, 2012). This sampling frame complies with statistical recommendations according to the number of constructs in the model as indicated by Hair et al. (2010), and favors the necessary variation in population characteristics to capture the hypothesized effects and group differences (as suggested by Plog in Biederman et al. 2008, and also in Plog, 2002). In addition, 450 subjects is a

sufficient number to detect mediation effects with a power level of .80, based on the sample size guidelines of Fritz and MacKinnon (2007).

Measures

The scale employed to capture the construct venturesomeness was originally developed for consulting purposes and remained proprietary until a version was published by Plog (1993), and used by Griffith and Albanese (1996) and Ralston (1993). Ralston (1993) found sufficient reliability in using the instrument, yielding an internal consistency coefficient of 0.86. Griffith and Albanese (1996) reported that construct validity was achieved through the use of alternative forms of measurement, while external validity was verified by assessing the relationship between the instrument and actual travel behavior of respondents. This research employs the scale version consisting of the four statements in Plog (1995) that have most recently appeared in the literature (Chandler, 1998; Chandler and Costello, 2002; Hardy, 2010; Litvin and Smith, 2016), slightly updated according to Plog and Browsh (2013). Chandler (1998) reported a reliability Cronbach's alpha of 0.610, and Litvin and Smith (2016) found that the scale was sufficiently reliable with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.891. The four-items scale in 7-point Likert format is shown in Part 1 of the questionnaire in the Appendix.

The scales to measure consumption needs (epistemic, emotional, functional, and social) and anticipated need congruity are based on the instrument developed by Bosnjak et al. (2011), which was derived from several investigations in the field of marketing and consumer behavior, including the work by Sheth, Newman, and Gross (1991a). Bosnjak et al. (2011) reported internal consistency measures of α=.88 for epistemic needs, α=.80 for emotional needs, α=.85 for functional needs, and α=.68 for social needs. For the purpose of this study, the items were slightly adapted in order to elicit the pre-visit perceptions of potential tourists, instead of post-

visit perceptions as in Bosnjak et al. (2011). In addition, other items are incorporated in the scales in order to capture the broad dimensions of the constructs. Items to measure epistemic needs were drawn from Bello and Etzel (1985), Lee and Crompton (1992), and Mo, Howard and Havitz (1993). Items to measure emotional needs were incorporated from Bigné and Andreu (2004), Hosany and Gilbert (2010), Hosany et al. (2015), and Lin et al. (2007). Items to measure functional needs were drawn from Hsu, Tsai, and Wu (2009), Jang and Cai (2002), and Uysal and Jurowski (1994). Items to measure social needs were incorporated from Baloglu and McCleary (1999) and Liu et al. (2012).

The items to measure consumption needs and anticipated need congruity can be seen in the Appendix, with questions presented in a 7-point Likert scale format based on the approach used by Bosnjak et al. (2011). In order to operationalize anticipated need congruity, participants were first asked to rate how much they think each of the four consumption needs is something they seek when going on a vacation (Part 1 of the survey). Then, study participants are asked to consider the two destinations for their next vacation (Part 2 of the survey), requiring them to provide their evaluation of the extent to which each destination would satisfy the four types of needs (Part 3 of the survey). In this way, anticipated need congruity can be determined by measuring the difference between respondent's rating of the consumption need and the expected fulfillment of such need at the destination, according to the calculation of gap scores (Sirgy et al., 1991, Sirgy et al., 2007; Sirgu and Su, 2000; Usakli and Baloglu, 2011). The smaller the gap between the individuals' consumption needs and the expected satisfaction of such needs if visiting a given destination, the greater the anticipated need congruity, and vice versa.

A limitation of using absolute discrepancy scores to measure congruity is that those scores do not distinguish the level in the Likert scale at which the discrepancy occurs. For

instance, a gap between ratings 5 and 7 is considered the same as the gap between ratings 2 and 4, without taking into account that the former implies a stronger congruity than the latter. One way to address this limitation and increase the accuracy of the congruity measurement is by using mean scores, so that the resulting congruity estimate takes into account the scale level at which the gap occurs. Thus, in this research the degree of congruity is calculated following a modified gap score formula based on Sirgy et al. (1991, 1997), determined as the average (mean score) of the respondent's rating of their consumption need and the rating of expected fulfillment of such need at the destination, derived as follows:

$$\text{Congruity} = \frac{\text{rating of need} + \text{rating of expected fulfillment of the need at the destination}}{2}$$

As shown in Part 2 of the Appendix, the survey measured destination preference by asking participants about their interest and likelihood of visiting each of the two destinations with questions on a 7-point Likert scale format, based on the instrument used by Beerli, Díaz Meneses, and Moreno Gil (2007) and Litvin and Goh (2002). Also, respondents' familiarity with the destinations was assessed using the 7-point Likert single item used by Park and Jang (2013), including questions about past visitation to the destinations. Part 4 of the questionnaire included a number of measures that, although not used to test the hypothesized relationships, were employed as control variables in the study: involvement with leisure travel (Beerli, Díaz Meneses, and Moreno Gil, 2007), perceived risk at the destination and at the country (Lepp and Gibson, 2008), prior knowledge of international destinations (Sharifpour, Walters, and Ritchie, 2014a; Sharifpour et al., 2014b), and the scale assessing Cohen's tourist roles (Cohen, 1972) as operationalized by (Lepp and Gibson, 2003, 2008). The number of points used in the Likert scales were based on Nunnally (1978) and Allen and Seaman (2007). Finally, in Part 5 of the

survey six questions captured demographic data, such as age, gender, educational level, household income, marital status, zip code, and frequency of vacation trips taken per year.

Research Instrument

As shown in the questionnaire in the Appendix, study participants are first asked to rate how much each consumption need is something they seek to fulfill when going on a vacation. Then, participants read a brief descriptive paragraph with a scenario for each of the two destinations, following a method similar to the one used by Nickerson (1989), Nickerson and Ellis (1991), and Tanford and Montgomery (2015). Based on the approach of Park and Jang (2013) and Pearce (2011), the scenarios also include images of the two destinations. The first scenario describes Cancun as a well-established, mass tourism destination that has an extensive offer of renowned hotels, restaurants and shops. The second scenario describes Isla Holbox as a small fishing village that is starting to receive visitors, but is still underdeveloped as a tourism destination. Two questions are also included in the questionnaire as manipulation checks to verify that respondents indeed perceived Cancun as the oldest tourism destination, and Isla Holbox as the newest.

After reading each destination scenario, participants were instructed to indicate their degree of familiarity with each destination and the number of times they have visited them in the past, and also their behavioral intentions to visit each of the two destinations in the future. Respondents were then asked a set of questions about the extent to which each tourism destination is perceived to potentially satisfy their epistemic, emotional, functional, and social needs drawn from the theory by Sheth, Newman, and Gross (1991a, 1991b). In the last section of the instrument, a number of questions are included to obtain the demographic profiles of respondents. The item “This is an attention filter. If you read this statement, select the last option

- extremely important 7" was embedded within the multi-item scales as a survey quality check to identify cases to be removed from the data to be analyzed (Dollinger and DiLalla, 1996).

Data Collection

In order to pretest the survey instrument and evaluate how its measures worked under realistic conditions (Fowler, 2002), an invitation to participate in a pilot study was made to undergraduate students in the Business Administration program at The University of Texas – Pan American. The invitation was made personally with permission of professors and instructors in various classrooms after approval from the university's Institutional Review Board (IRB), and yielded 117 subjects who completed the online survey. The data gathered from this convenience sample of student was used to assess the dimensions of the consumption needs constructs in the research model, as described in more detail in the section of the analysis and results (Chapter 4).

Respondents used in the main study to test the proposed research hypotheses were obtained through the database services of Qualtrics, an online survey technology provider that keeps panels of consumers nationwide. Using these types of online panels is a convenient, effective way to obtain data with enough variation from respondents of the target populations according to the desired characteristics (Couper, 2000; Dolnicar, Laesser, and Matus, 2009). After obtaining the corresponding approval from the IRB of The University of Texas – Pan American, the research instrument was uploaded to the electronic platform and administered in the spring of 2015.

To collect data from a nationally representative sample to test the research model, Qualtrics was instructed to administer the online survey according to demographic quotas approximating the population of the United States. The online survey company sent a total of 8,175 invitations to its panel members by e-mail, and 1,532 of them opened and responded the

online survey during the course of one week. Surveys that were incomplete or did not pass attention checks were ruled out (attention checks are explained in the questionnaire section), retaining only those that were complete and fulfilled specified demographic criteria, until the desired target of 450 subjects was reached. The data collected from this sample was used to evaluate the reliability and validity of the measures employed and to estimate the hypothesized relationships in the proposed model (Hair et al., 2010), as shown in the section of the analysis and results (Chapter 4).

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Because the purpose of this research is to test a predictive model built as an extension of existing theories, the model proposed was estimated employing partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM), which "is the preferred method when the research objective is theory development and prediction" (Hair et al., 2011, p. 143). PLS-SEM is a technique that maximizes the explained variance of latent constructs by estimating partial model relationships through an iterative sequence of ordinary least squares (OLS) regressions, and in the last decades has become highly useful to explore and test new models in social sciences research (Fornell and Bookstein, 1982; Hair et al., 2011, 2012). Thus, after presenting the profile of the respondents in the consumer panel used in the study, this chapter describes the model specification, reliability, and validity evaluations of the constructs examined in the model. In addition, the estimation of the structural model to test the hypothesized relations is shown, including the tests of mediation. Since the study focuses on attitudes and behavioral intentions toward Cancun and Isla Holbox, the procedures and analyses of the models were conducted for the two destinations in a parallel manner. Then, a description of the study's results and a summary of the hypotheses tests is presented.

Sample Demographics

The characteristics of subjects in the main sample used in this study (n=450) are shown in Table 3. Respondents' ages, income levels, and regions of residence are close representations of

those same characteristics in the general population of the United States (U. S. Census Bureau, 2011).

Table 3. Demographic Profile of Respondents

Characteristic	Category	Result
Age*	18-24	13.1%
	25-44	35.0%
	45-64	34.8%
	65-70	17.1%
Income*	Less than $15,000	9.6%
	$15,000 – $24,999	20.2%
	$25,000 –$34,999	15.1%
	$35,000 – $49,999	20.0%
	$50,000 – $74,999	20.0%
	$75,000 – $99,999	6.7%
	$100,000 – $149,999	6.0%
	$150,000 or more	2.4%
Region of residence*	West	23.0%
	South	37.0%
	Midwest	22.0%
	Northeast	18.0%
Highest educational attainment	High school or less	19.8%
	Vocational / Technical (2 year)	7.1%
	Some college	33.1%
	College graduate (4 year)	29.8%
	Master's degree (MS)	9.1%
	PhD / Professional degree (MD, JD, etc.)	1.1%
Gender	Male	32.4%
	Female	67.6%
Ethnicity	White / Caucasian	78.9%
	African American	8.6%
	Hispanic / Latino	6.7%
	Other	5.3%
	Preferred not to answer	0.5%
Frequency of vacation trips	Less than once per year	9.3%
	Once per year	28.1%
	Twice per year	33.6%
	Three times per year	16.2%
	More than four times per year	12.8%

* Percentages closely approximated to those of the population in the United States (U. S. Census Bureau, 2011), except for some income brackets that were adjusted to meet survey target quotas.

With respect to age, data was collected only from respondents not older than 70 years old as a way to avoid responses from subjects who are not prone to travel due to age-related health problems, as common in older members of the senior population (Shoemaker, 2000). In terms of income and geographical distribution, the profiles of participants in this sample are approximate to those of consumers in the nation, which permits greater representativeness and generalizability of the research findings.

In addition to other common demographic characteristics, Table 3 reports the frequency of vacation trips taken by participants. More than 90 percent of surveyed consumers travel for vacation purposes at least once per year, suggesting that the sample is appropriate to investigate travel attitudes and behavioral intentions in destination selection.

Model Specification

Before testing the proposed structural equation model (SEM), an assessment of the measurement model was performed in order to evaluate the extent to which measured variables represent the constructs in the research model (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988). Measurement theory specifies how the scale items included in the research instrument correspond to latent, unobservable constructs which are not measured directly (Hair et al., 2010). As shown in the next sections, the constructs of the research model were validated by analyzing the factor structure of anticipated congruity measures using a student sample, and also by confirming the factors, reliability, and validity of the model using the data from the sample of respondents in the national consumer panel (Brown, 2013).

Pilot Study Results

In order to initially assess the dimensionality of anticipated congruity measures for the four consumption needs in the research model (epistemic, emotional, functional, and social),

exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted with the data collected exclusively for this purpose through a pilot study using a convenience sample (Warner, 2008). As described earlier in the data collection section, 117 undergraduate students participated in the study by completing an online survey with the research instrument. This sample size is sufficient to conduct EFA according to the guidelines provided by Hair et al. (2010), based on a power level of 80 percent and a significance level of .05.

Using the data set from the student sample, one EFA was conducted for the consumption needs corresponding to Cancun and another EFA was conducted for the consumption needs corresponding to Isla Holbox. The interest was on assessing the dimensions of the consumption needs congruity measures that were adapted to this study, since the other measures in the model were drawn and operationalized directly from the literature without substantial modification. The EFA procedure to identify the factors of both destinations followed the steps suggested by Hair et al. (2010), using the software IBM SPSS Statistics version 23. As expected, an inspection of the correlation matrices for measures of each destination showed that more than half of the variables were significantly correlated with each other (with coefficients higher than 0.3), and the Bartlett´s tests of sphericity were statistically significant for both destinations (p=.000). A revision of the partial correlations in the anti-image matrices showed that all were under .7, while all of the measures of sample adequacy (MSAs) had values over .50, indicating an acceptable correlation in the data matrices to justify the application of further EFA procedures (Hair et al., 2010).

The EFA was conducted following the principal components method. Oblique rotated factor analysis was applied separately for the two destinations using PROMAX rotation as a way to obtain an optimal factor structure. According to DeVellis (2003) and Hair et al. (2010), a non-

orthogonal rotation method like PROMAX is recommended to identify theoretically meaningful factors or constructs that are not totally independent, such as in the case of the consumption needs in the theory of market choice behavior (e.g., a product such as a smart phone may fulfill a functional need as a communication device, but at the same time may serve a social need as a symbol of status to others). An iterative process in which variables with low loadings and cross-loadings were removed from the analysis was followed; re-specifying the factor models until obtaining the most appropriate factor solution for the data (Hair et al., 2010; Werner, 2008). The number of factors to extract was determined a priori (Hair et al., 2010) as defined by the constructs theoretical framework of this research: the four consumption needs in the theory of Sheth, Newman and Gross (1991a, 1991b).

As can be seen in Table 4, the four components in the factor solution for the Isla Holbox model account for 83.6 percent of the total variance explained, and all factor loadings are higher than .5 as recommended by Hair et al. (2010). Similarly, the results in Table 5 shows that the four components in the factor solution for the Cancun model account for 77.2 percent of the total variance explained and all factor loadings are higher than .5 as suggested by Hair et al. (2010). The loading of the item “Receive high-quality hospitality services” is slightly higher than 1, which according to Jöreskog (1999) is common when using an oblique rotation method such as PROMAX, which was used in this study, but “does not necessarily imply that something is wrong” with the factor solution (p. 1).

Table 4. Pilot Study EFA for Anticipated Need Congruity in Novel Destination

Factors and items	Components			
	1	2	3	4
Epistemic				
Get an intellectually enriching experience		0.851		
Achieve a sense of discovery		0.989		
Explore new things		0.958		
Get involved with unique activities		0.613		
Experience customs different from those in my own environment		0.808		
Emotional				
Feel a sense of pleasure				0.872
Feel a sense of delight				0.912
Feel a sense of excitement				0.786
Feel a sense of amazement				0.818
Feel a sense of inspiration				0.750
Functional				
Enjoy good amenities for tourists	0.718			
Receive high-quality hospitality services	0.924			
Visit a vacation spot with a long history of good reputation	0.904			
Find good quality in accommodation facilities	0.936			
Find accessible transportation to move easily at the destination	0.870			
Find good shopping options	0.856			
Find great entertainment and amusement options	0.881			
Social				
Meet people with similar interests			0.957	
Be at the same place with other tourists you admire and look up to			0.902	
Project the image of the kind of people you aspire to be			0.918	
Visit a place where other people similar to you spend their vacation			0.826	
Be perceived by others as similar to the image of tourists at the destination			0.812	
Eigenvalues cumulative percentage	51.5%	70.3%	79.9%	83.6%

Extraction Method: Principal components analysis
Rotation Method: PROMAX with Kaiser Normalization

Table 5. Pilot Study EFA for Anticipated Need Congruity in Mature Destination

Factors and items	Components			
	1	2	3	4
Epistemic				
Get an intellectually enriching experience			0.943	
Achieve a sense of discovery			0.897	
Explore new things			0.784	
Get involved with unique activities			0.656	
Experience customs different from those in my own environment			0.696	
Emotional				
Feel a sense of pleasure				0.971
Feel a sense of delight				0.939
Feel a sense of excitement				0.810
Feel a sense of amazement				0.786
Feel a sense of inspiration				0.542
Functional				
Enjoy good amenities for tourists	0.733			
Receive high-quality hospitality services	1.040			
Visit a vacation spot with a long history of good reputation	0.769			
Find good quality in accommodation facilities	0.891			
Find accessible transportation to move easily at the destination	0.711			
Find good shopping options	0.747			
Find great entertainment and amusement options	0.709			
Social				
Meet people with similar interests		0.773		
Be at the same place with other tourists you admire and look up to		0.927		
Project the image of the kind of people you aspire to be		0.907		
Visit a place where other people similar to you spend their vacation		0.862		
Be perceived by others as similar to the image of tourists at the destination		0.869		
Eigenvalues cumulative percentage	54.1%	66.3%	73.2%	77.2%

Extraction Method: Principal components analysis
Rotation Method: PROMAX with Kaiser Normalization

Because this research focuses on two models of consumers' attitudes and behavioral intentions toward two destinations, the analysis requires the models to maintain the same structure of items per construct to be conceptually and empirically comparable, similarly to the

approaches followed by Chen et al. (2016), Lin et al. (2007), Palau-Saumell et al. (2016), and Reisinger and Mavondo (2004, 2005). As reflected in the EFA solutions in Tables 4 and 5 obtained from a sample of students (n=117), the scale items in each of the four dimensions are equivalent across both models, Cancun and Isla Holbox, and constitute the constructs to be assessed in the next section using the data from the national consumer panel sample.

Reliability and Validity

Specifying a model for PLS-SEM requires the set-up of an outer model, which is used to evaluate the relationships between the reflective indicator variables and their corresponding latent construct (Hair et al., 2012. 2014a, 2014b). An examination of the outer model, also known as measurement model, is necessary to verify the reliability and validity of the constructs. The software employed to analyze the proposed model was SmartPLS version 3.2.3 (Ringle, Wende, and Becker, 2014), a user-friendly, graphics-based package for PLS-SEM statistical analysis that is increasingly used in marketing and consumer behavior (Hair et al., 2012) and in travel and tourism research (do Valle and Assake, 2016).

As a way to confirm the factors structure previously identified with EFA in the student sample (Brown, 2013; Hair et al., 2010), the same indicator variables were included in the PLS-SEM analysis using data from the nation-wide consumer panel (n=450). A separate outer model analysis was performed for each destination in the study, including their operationalized variables in the measurement theory: venturesomeness, anticipated need congruity for the destination, and visit intentions for the destination. The initial assessment results indicated appropriate measurement models, except for the construct venturesomeness which yielded average variance extracted (AVE) values slightly under the recommended .50 level (Hair et al., 2012). After examining the factor loadings and considering their domain contribution to the

content validity of the construct (Hair et al., 2011), the item “I prefer to go to undiscovered places before big hotels and restaurants are built” was removed because of its low loading and because it seems tautological in predicting preference for destinations with different degrees of development (Hunt, 2010). Thus, the outer models were examined again with the reduced three-item venturesomeness construct in both destination models, yielding AVEs greater than .50 in all constructs. The composite reliabilities and outer loadings that resulted from the new assessments of the Isla Holbox and Cancun models are reported in Table 6 and Table 7, respectively.

Table 6 shows the outer model results for Isla Holbox with all composite reliability values greater than .70, complying with the recommended levels for internal consistency (Hair et al., 2011; 2012). The outer loadings in the constructs are over the ideal criteria of .70, except for one of the venturesomeness indicators with a value of .560 and one of the anticipated functional congruity indicators with a value of .693, which are considered acceptable levels for exploratory and theory-building models according the guidelines provided by Hair et al. (2012). Similarly, Table 7 shows the outer model results for Cancun with all composite reliability values greater than .70, complying with the recommended levels for internal consistency (Hair et al., 2011; 2012). The outer loadings in all construct are over the suggested .70 criteria except for one of the venturesomeness indicators with a value of .570, which is considered an acceptable level for exploratory and theory-building models according Hair et al. (2012). Therefore, the reliability of the data collected through the research instrument for the Isla Holbox and Cancun models was verified as a necessary condition to determine the validity of constructs under study (Hair et al., 2010; Kerlinger and Lee, 2000).

Table 6. Outer Loadings and Reliability for Novel Destination Model

Construct	Item Description	Loadings
Venturesomeness	I make decisions quickly and easily rather than deliberating over them.	0.560
	I have much more energy than most persons my age.	0.862
CR = .795	I am actively involved in a regular, rigorous fitness program.	0.810
Epistemic	Get an intellectually enriching experience	0.821
	Achieve a sense of discovery	0.873
CR = .924	Explore new things	0.890
	Get involved with unique activities	0.836
	Experience customs different from those in my own environment	0.784
Emotional	Feel a sense of pleasure	0.903
	Feel a sense of delight	0.924
CR = .944	Feel a sense of excitement	0.813
	Feel a sense of amazement	0.854
	Feel a sense of inspiration	0.893
Functional	Enjoy good amenities for tourists	0.854
	Receive high-quality hospitality services	0.854
CR = .929	Visit a vacation spot with a long history of good reputation	0.876
	Find good quality in accommodation facilities	0.714
	Find accessible transportation to move easily at the destination	0.693
	Find good shopping options	0.832
	Find great entertainment and amusement options	0.809
Social	Meet people with similar interests	0.836
	Be at the same place with other tourists you admire and look up to	0.920
CR = .950	Project the image of the kind of people you aspire to be	0.903
	Visit a place where other people similar to you spend their vacation	0.902
	Be perceived by others as similar to the image of tourists at the destination	0.887
Visit Intention	To what degree would you like to spend a vacation in Isla Holbox?	0.956
	How interested are you in vacationing in Isla Holbox?	0.960
CR = .954	What is the likelihood of you visiting Isla Holbox for a vacation?	0.889

Note: All factor loadings are statistically significant (p = .000); CR = composite reliability.

Table 7. Outer Loadings and Reliability for Mature Destination Model

Construct	Item Description	Loadings
Venturesomeness	I make decisions quickly and easily rather than deliberating over them.	0.570
	I have much more energy than most persons my age.	0.876
CR = .796	I am actively involved in a regular, rigorous fitness program.	0.791
Epistemic	Get an intellectually enriching experience	0.847
	Achieve a sense of discovery	0.909
CR = .917	Explore new things	0.763
	Get involved with unique activities	0.806
	Experience customs different from those in my own environment	0.820
Emotional	Feel a sense of pleasure	0.907
	Feel a sense of delight	0.923
CR = .943	Feel a sense of excitement	0.916
	Feel a sense of amazement	0.841
	Feel a sense of inspiration	0.784
Functional	Enjoy good amenities for tourists	0.795
	Receive high-quality hospitality services	0.853
CR = .934	Visit a vacation spot with a long history of good reputation	0.761
	Find good quality in accommodation facilities	0.873
	Find accessible transportation to move easily at the destination	0.806
	Find good shopping options	0.800
	Find great entertainment and amusement options	0.837
Social	Meet people with similar interests	0.845
	Be at the same place with other tourists you admire and look up to	0.917
CR = .953	Project the image of the kind of people you aspire to be	0.919
	Visit a place where other people similar to you spend their vacation	0.898
	Be perceived by others as similar to the image of tourists at the destination	0.893
Visit Intention	To what degree would you like to spend a vacation in Cancun?	0.961
	How interested are you in vacationing in Cancun?	0.967
CR = .964	What is the likelihood of you visiting Cancun for a vacation?	0.915

Note: All factor loadings are statistically significant (p = .000); CR = composite reliability

Convergent and discriminant validity was assessed for the models of the two destinations under study. Following Fornell and Larcker's (1981) method, the results in Table 8 show that the AVEs of all constructs in the Isla Holbox model are greater than .50 and higher than all the

squared correlations between the constructs, indicating a satisfactory level of convergent and discriminant validity as required in PLS-SEM outer models (Hair et al., 2011, 2012).

Table 8. Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Matrix for Novel Destination Model

Latent Constructs	**M.**	**S.D.**	**Skw.**	**Kts.**	**AVE**	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Venturesomeness	4.13	1.32	.03	-.55	.571		.064	.061	.132	.162	.109
2. Epistemic Congruity	5.47	0.95	-.57	-.07	.708	.252		.483	.226	.166	.224
3. Emotional Congruity	5.71	1.00	-.49	-.18	.771	.247	.695		.358	.242	.212
4. Functional Congruity	4.79	1.02	-.15	.02	.652	.364	.475	.598		.377	.135
5. Social Congruity	4.23	1.25	-.12	-.31	.792	.402	.407	.492	.614		.211
6. Visit Intentions	4.19	1.83	-.22	-1.1	.875	.33	.473	.46	.368	.459	

Note: M. = mean; S.D. = standard deviation; Skw. = skewness; Kts. = kurtosis; AVE = average variance extracted. Values below the diagonal are the bivariate correlations and all are statistically significant. Values above the diagonal are squared correlations.

Similarly, Table 9 shows the results based on Fornell and Larcker's (1981) method in which the AVEs of all constructs in the Cancun model are greater than .50 and higher than all the squared correlations between the constructs, indicating an adequate level of convergent and discriminant validity as required in PLS-SEM outer models (Hair et al., 2011, 2012).

Based on the reported results of the outer model analysis, the constructs in the models for the destinations employed in this research exhibit sufficient internal consistency reliability, share a proportion of the variance in relation to the theory constructs, but are also distinguishable from other constructs in the same measurement theory as necessary to demonstrate construct validity (Hair et al., 2010; Kerlinger & Lee, 2000).

Table 9. Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Matrix for Mature Destination Model

Latent Constructs	M.	S.D.	Skw.	Kts.	AVE	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Venturesomeness	4.13	1.32	.02	-.53	.573		.244	.115	.048	.219	.182
2. Epistemic Congruity	5.08	1.00	-.22	-.08	.689	.494		.487	.294	.404	.327
3. Emotional Congruity	5.73	0.95	-.44	-.37	.767	.339	.698		.551	.283	.281
4. Functional Congruity	5.81	0.82	-.79	.63	.670	.22	.542	.742		.200	.210
5. Social Congruity	4.44	1.36	-.31	-.44	.801	.468	.636	.532	.447		.333
6. Visit Intentions	4.39	1.82	-.37	-.97	.898	.427	.572	.53	.458	.577	

Note: M. = mean; S.D. = standard deviation; Skw. = skewness; Kts. = kurtosis; AVE = average variance extracted. Values below the diagonal are the bivariate correlations and all are statistically significant. Values above the diagonal are squared correlations.

Statistical Assumptions

Although PLS-SEM is a robust technique with less strict underlying assumptions about the data it handles, the consumer panel data (n=450) was examined before estimating the proposed structural model, as a way to verify the quality of the data for subsequent interpretation of results (Hair et al., 2010). Normality of the data was assessed by inspecting the skewness and kurtosis statistics, showing that data in the majority of the variables approximated to normality, but there were a number of variables indicating negative skewness as often occurs with empirical, survey-based data (Warner, 2008).

According to Huck (2012), scores with skewness or kurtosis values falling outside of the range of -1.0 to 1.0 can be remedied through mathematical transformations before proceeding with further statistical analysis. Therefore, departures from normality in the variables exceeding values of -1.0 were remedied by employing squared transformations, as recommended by Hair et al. (2010). This transformation reduced any potential effects of non-normality, which in any event are substantially diminished in sample sizes over 200 cases, as in the model in this study

(Hair et al., 2010). As shown in Tables 8 and 9, with the exception of the kurtosis for the intentions to visit Isla Holbox measure, all of the measures in the data employed to test the research model complied with acceptable distributional properties.

The assumption of absence of multicollinearity was assessed by inspecting the VIFs between the independent variables in the model. All of the VIFs were lower than 5.0, showing that no violation of multicollinearity was present in the independent variables as required in PLS-SEM models (Hair et al, 2011, 2012). No imputation was necessary because there was no missing data, since the online survey required respondents to answer all the questions in the instrument.

Structural Model

Because the objective of this research is to test the direction and magnitude of relationships between constructs, path analysis was performed in line with past regression-based methodological approaches in studies involving push and pull factors (Uysal, Li, and Sirakaya-Turk, 2008) and predicting choice in the context of leisure and travel (Ajzen and Driver, 1992; Beerli, Díaz Meneses, and Moreno Gil, 2007; Lin et al., 2007). Path analysis is recommended for mediation models with latent constructs (Gogineni, Alsup, and Gillespie, 1995; Nunkoo, Ramkissoon, and Gursoy, 2013), and thus is appropriate for this study based on previous research examining the mediation effects of consumption needs (Kim et al., 2002; Xiao and Kim, 2009).

SmartPLS version 3.2.3 was used to set-up of an inner model, which displays the relationships between the latent constructs under study (Hair et al., 2012. 2014a, 2014b). Estimating the inner model, also known as structural model, is necessary to assess the path coefficients between endogenous and exogenous latent constructs in the tested model. Two

structural models with the consumer panel data (n=450) were estimated to test the hypothesized effect of venturesomeness on destination choice with no mediation effects, and also the hypothesized mediation effects of anticipated needs congruity in the Isla Holbox and Cancun models as depicted in Figures 7 and 8, respectively.

As a way to verify that the two scenarios presented in the survey were actually perceived by study participants as intended, a comparison of the ratings of the perceived degree of the development of the destinations was conducted. As can be seen in Table 10, the majority of the respondents (98.2%) rated Cancun as the most developed destination, while the majority of them (96.9%) rated Isla Holbox as the least developed destination. These results corroborate the appropriate use of the two destination scenarios according to the intended purpose of the research design, representing different degrees of development following the TALC (Butler, 1980).

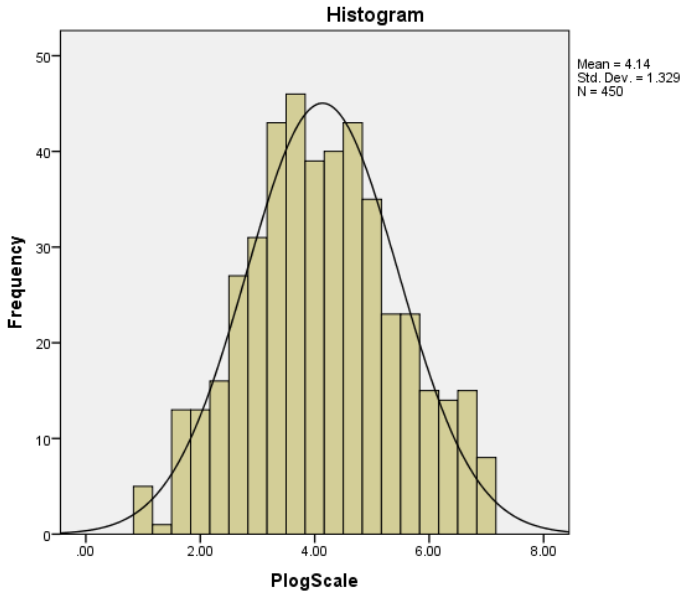
Table 10. Perceived Degree of Development in Destination Scenarios

Survey items	**Destination**	**Frequency**	**Percentaje**
Which is most developed as a tourist destination?	Isla Holbox	8	1.8%
	Cancun	442	98.2%
	Total	450	100%
Which is least developed as a tourist destination?	Isla Holbox	436	96.9%
	Cancun	14	3.1%
	Total	450	100%

Consistent with the prediction in Plog's model (1974, 1991, 2004), the venturesomeness construct showed a normal distribution in the study sample. When the responses of participants to the venturesomeness scale were graphed, the results reflected a close approximation to the normal 'bell curve' distribution as shown in Figure 12. This finding was corroborated by inspecting the normality statistics obtained in SPSS (skewness = 0.075; kurtosis = -0.467). Therefore, the sample of consumers studied in this research seems to be adequate in representing

the distribution of the general population according to previous venturesomeness studies using larger-scale samples (Litvin and Smith, 2016; Plog, 2002).

Figure 12. Distribution of Venturesomeness in the Study Sample



With respect to the treatment of venturesomeness as a predictor in the proposed model, the method recommended by Sharma, Durand, and Gur-Arie (1981) was employed in order to corroborate that the construct was appropriately estimated as a predictor construct, and not as a moderator. Regression analyses using interaction terms revealed that venturesomeness has a statistically significant relationship with the criterion variable (visit intention), but does not show a statistically significant interaction with consumption needs in predicting destination preference. Therefore, the use of venturesomeness as a predicting construct is confirmed as consistent with the literature in which psychographic variables have been employed as predictors of tourists' attitudes and behavior, not as moderators (Eachus, 2004; Johar and Sirgy, 1995; Madrigal, 1995; Reisinger and Felix Mavondo, 2005; Schul and Crompton, 1983; Woodside and Pitts, 1976).

Test of Hypotheses

In order to test hypothesis H1, two separate structural models were estimated by specifying direct effects without the anticipated needs congruity constructs: the first model tested the relationship between venturesomeness and intentions to visit Isla Holbox (novel destination), and a second model tested the relationship between venturesomeness and intentions to visit Cancun (mature destination). The bias-corrected and accelerated (BCa) bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 subsamples was used to determine statistical significance as recommended by Hair et al. (2014a, 2014b). As can be seen in Table 11, hypothesis H1 is not supported because the effect of venturesomeness on intentions to visit Isla Holbox ($\gamma = .360$, $p < .001$) is smaller than the effect of venturesomeness on intentions to visit Cancun ($\gamma = .445$, $p < .001$). In addition, the effect of venturesomeness accounts for less explained variance in intentions to visit Isla Holbox ($R^2 = .129$) than in intentions to visit Cancun ($R^2 = .198$).

Table 11. Effects of Venturesomeness on Visit Intent to Destinations

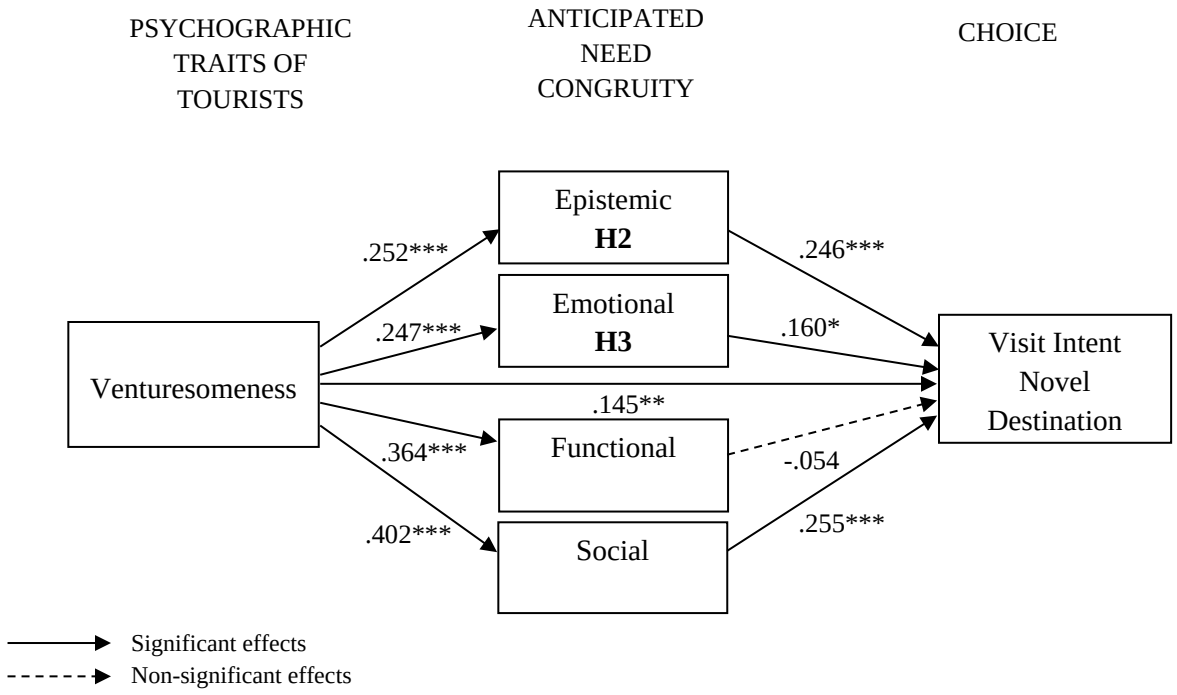
Direct paths	Standardized coefficient	Significance (p value)[a]	Variance explained
Venturesomeness → Visit Intent Novel Destination	.360	.000	.129
Venturesomeness → Visit Intent Mature Destination	.445	.000	.198

[a] =Two-tailed probability.

Then, in order to test the overall research model with the proposed effects for a novel tourism destination, a structural model including all four mediators was estimated using study participants' responses about their attitudes and behavioral intentions towards Isla Holbox. The bias-corrected and accelerated (BCa) bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 subsamples was used to determine statistical significance (Hair et al., 2014a, 2014b). The PLS-SEM results revealed that the relationships between venturesomeness and the four anticipated needs congruity

constructs are statistically significant. Also, it was found that the dependent variable intention to visit Isla Holbox is predicted by three of the anticipated need congruity constructs: epistemic, emotional, and social. The paths coefficients of the structural model estimation for Isla Holbox are shown in Figure 13.

Figure 13. Path Results of Model for Novel Destination



*p <.05, **p <.01. ***p <.001.

According to Hair et al. (2011, 2014a, 2014b), PLS-SEM models are evaluated by considering the constructs' coefficient of determination (R^2), path coefficients, and Stone-Geisser's Q^2. The R^2 values for the endogenous constructs in the Isla Holbox model are: visit intentions =.335, anticipated epistemic congruity =.064, anticipated emotional congruity =.061, anticipated functional congruity =.133, and anticipated social congruity =.162. While some of the R^2 values of the mediating variables are relatively low, the R^2 of the study's target dependent variable is .335, which is a reasonable explained variance considering that "R^2 results of 0.20 are considered high in disciplines such as consumer behavior" (Hair et al., 2011, p. 147). As can be

seen in Figure 13, eight out of the nine hypothesized paths are statistically significant, indicating that variables were appropriately specified in the model. The Q^2 values were estimated using blindfolding and omission distance set to 7, resulting in all values above 0 as required to verify predictive relevance (Hair et al., 2011, 2012).

As a way to test the individual mediation effects in hypotheses H2a and H3a, additional procedures other than the conventional SEM were necessary. While traditional approaches to test mediation effects are primarily based on the method suggested by Baron and Kenny (1986), recent methodological advances in testing mediation effects have made available newer methods that offer more precision and reliability. Specifically, it has been recommended that mediation models should employ bootstrapping resampling, in which significance tests are determined by evaluating confidence intervals produced by the SEM estimation (MacKinnon, Lockwood, and Williams, 2004; MacKinnon et al., 2002; Preacher and Hayes, 2004; Zhao, Lynch, and Chen, 2010). For the analysis of multiple mediators, Preacher and Hayes (2008) recommend software scripts and syntax tools (macros) to be used as add-ons in major statistical packages to conduct the tests of complex mediation models, such as the multiple parallel mediation in this research.

The macro PROCESS developed by Hayes (2013) has gained popularity in social sciences studies (Gau, Corsaro, and Brunson, 2014; Hu et al., 2016; White and Turner, 2014), including research in business with models using PLS-SEM (Leal-Rodríguez et al., 2014). Thus, PROCESS version 2.15 was installed as an add-on in SPSS to conduct the tests of multiple mediation. A regression model using the latent variables' scores provided by SmartPLS was estimated for Isla Holbox including the independent variable, the four mediators, and the dependent variable with 5,000 bootstrap samples and 95% bias-corrected confidence intervals (Cheung and Lau, 2008; Preacher and Hayes, 2008). According to Hayes (2013) and Preacher

and Hayes (2008), a mediation effect is statistically significant when a zero value is not included within the confidence interval, which leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis that the indirect effect is zero. As an additional test to assess the significance of indirect effects, Mathieu and Taylor (2006) suggest conducting Sobel tests for each hypothesized mediation (Sobel, 1982). Also, Hair et al. (2014a) recommend assessing the strength of the variance accounted for (VAF), which is the ratio of indirect effect to total effects, as a way to determine "how much of the target construct's variance is explained by the indirect relationship via the mediator variable" (p. 225). Thus, the results of the Sobel tests provided by the PROCESS syntax and the VAFs obtained from the PLS-SEM estimation are used to complement the confidence intervals assessments.

The results of the three criteria of mediation tests for the Isla Holbox model are reported in Table 12. With respect to the whole model, the value zero is not included in the confidence interval of the Isla Holbox model with four mediators (.130, .252), indicating that at least one mediation effect is present through any of the mediators. An individual examination of the confidence intervals of anticipated epistemic congruity (.032, .105), anticipated emotional congruity (.010, .082), and anticipated social congruity (.059, .158) showed that mediation effects are supported because the value of zero is not included in the any of the intervals. In addition, Sobel tests showed results under .05, indicating a statistical significance. On the other hand, the mediation of anticipated functional congruity is not supported because the value zero is included within the confidence interval (-.061, .020) and the Sobel test yielded a non-significant value of .330. According to Hair et al. (2014a), the VAF values between .20 and .80 indicate the presence of partial mediation effects, which is corroborated by the statistically significant direct effect between venturesomeness and visit intention even after estimating the model including the mediating constructs (Hair et al., 2010).

Table 12. Mediation Effects on Intention to Visit the Novel Destination

Indirect Paths	Size of V. A. F.	C. I. = 95% Lower	C. I. = 95% Upper	Sobel Test (p value)[a]	Effect Supported
All four mediators	N/A	.130	.252	N/A	Yes
Venturesomeness → Epistemic →Visit Int.	.299	.032	.105	.000	Yes
Venturesomeness → Emotional →Visit Int.	.214	.010	.082	.018	Yes
Venturesomeness → Functional →Visit Int.	.156	-.061	.020	.330	No
Venturesomeness → Social →Visit Int.	.414	.059	.158	.000	Yes

Note: CI = confidence intervals (bias corrected); V.A.F. = Variance accounted for; N/A = Not applicable
[a] =Two-tailed probability.

The test of hypotheses H2b and H3b is based on the results shown in Table 13, which includes the SEM effects of venturesomeness and the four anticipated need congruity constructs on intention to visit Isla Holbox. The effects of anticipated epistemic congruity (hypothesis H2b: $\beta = .246$, $p < .01$) and anticipated emotional congruity (hypothesis H3b: $\beta = .160$, $p < .05$) on intention to visit Isla Holbox are stronger than the effect of anticipated functional congruity ($\beta = -.054$, $p = .345$) as expected, but not stronger than the effect of anticipated social congruity ($\beta = .255$, $p < .001$). The effect of venturesomeness on intention to visit Isla Holbox is statistically significant ($\gamma = .145$, $p < .01$) and lower than the effects of venturesomeness without mediators ($\gamma = .360$, $p < .001$) shown in Table 11, indicating a partial mediation effect in the complete model. Overall, the model with mediating constructs for Isla Holbox accounts for 33 percent of the variance explained in the independent variable, compared to 13 percent in the unmediated model reported in Table 11.

Then, as a way to test the overall research model with the proposed effects for a mature tourism destination, a structural model including all four mediators was estimated using study participants' responses about their attitudes and behavioral intentions towards Cancun. The bias-corrected and accelerated (BCa) bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 subsamples was used to determine statistical significance (Hair et al., 2014a, 2014b). The PLS-SEM results revealed that

the relationships between venturesomeness and the four anticipated needs congruity constructs are statistically significant. Also, it was found that the dependent variable intention to visit Cancun is predicted by all four of the anticipated need congruity constructs: epistemic, emotional, functional, and social. The paths coefficients of the structural model estimation for Cancun are visually depicted in Figure 14.

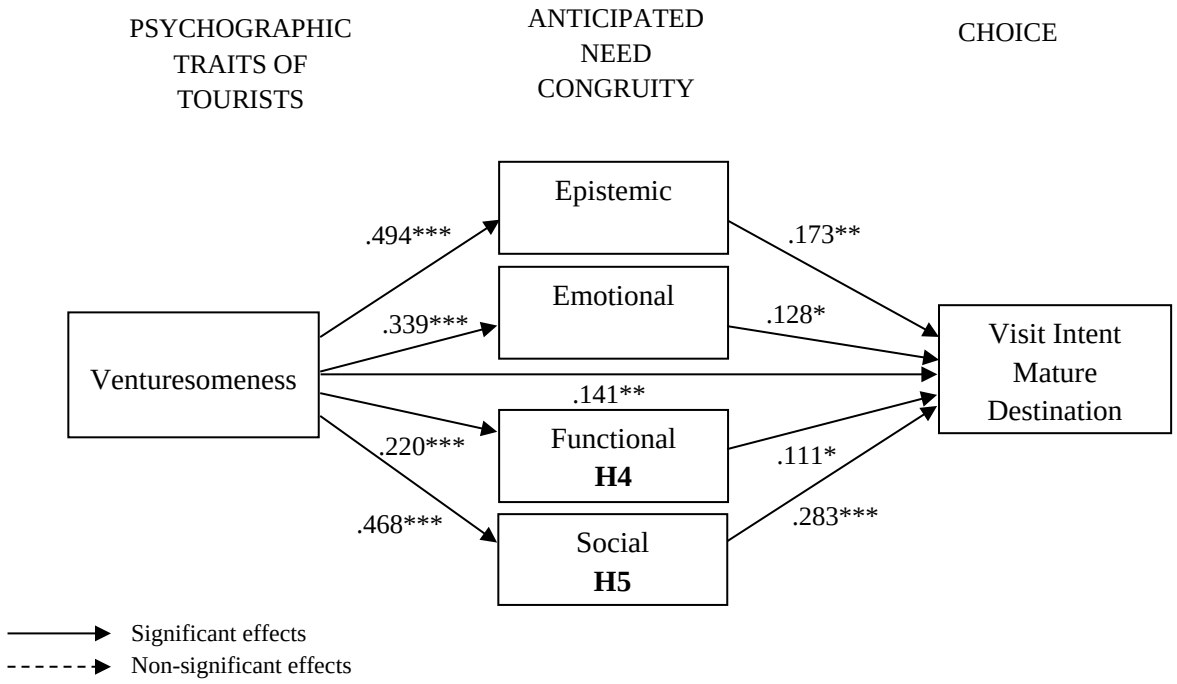
Table 13. Predicting Effects on Intention to Visit the Novel Destination

Direct Paths	Standardized Coefficient	Significance (p value)[a]	Effect Supported
Venturesomeness → Visit Intent	.145	.001	Yes
Epistemic → Visit Intent	.246	.000	Yes
Emotional → Visit Intent	.160	.012	Yes
Functional → Visit Intent	-.054	.345	No
Social → Visit Intent	.255	.000	Yes
Total variance explained = .335			

[a] =Two-tailed probability.

The R^2 values for the endogenous constructs in the Cancun model are: visit intentions =.441, anticipated epistemic congruity =.244, anticipated emotional congruity =.115, anticipated functional congruity =.048, and anticipated social congruity =.219. As mentioned before, the R^2 values of most mediating variables and the target dependent variable represent reasonable levels of explained variance considering the usual R^2 results in disciplines such as consumer behavior (Hair et al., 2011). As can be seen in Figure 14, all of the hypothesized paths are statistically significant, indicating that variables were appropriately specified in the model. The Q2 values were estimated using blindfolding and omission distance set to 7, resulting in all values above 0 as required to verify predictive relevance (Hair et al., 2011, 2012).

Figure 14. Path Results of Model for Mature Destination



*p <.05, **p <.01. ***p <.001.

In order to test the individual mediation effects in hypotheses H4a and H5a, the same bootstrapping and confidence intervals method employed to evaluate the Isla Holbox model was followed for the Cancun model (MacKinnon, Lockwood, and Williams, 2004; MacKinnon et al., 2002; Preacher and Hayes, 2004; Zhao, Lynch, and Chen, 2010). Using the script PROCESS version 2.15 to test multiple mediations (Hayes, 2013), a regression model using the latent variables' scores provided by SmartPLS was estimated for Cancun with the independent variable, the four mediators, and the dependent variable with 5,000 bootstrap samples and 95% bias-corrected confidence intervals (Cheung and Lau, 2008; Preacher and Hayes, 2008). Also, the VAFs obtained from the PLS-SEM estimation and the significance values from Sobel tests are used to complement the confidence interval method analysis (Hair et al., 2014a; Mathieu and Taylor, 2006; Sobel, 1982).

The results of the VAFs, the confidence intervals and Sobel tests for the Cancun model are reported in Table 14. In testing the whole model, the value zero is not included in the confidence interval of the Cancun model with four mediators (.222, .350), indicating that at least one mediation effect is present through any of the mediators. An individual examination of the confidence intervals of anticipated epistemic congruity (.032, .142), anticipated emotional congruity (.002, .193), and anticipated social congruity (.084, .187) showed that mediation effects are supported because the value of zero is not included in the any of the intervals and Sobel tests yielded significance results under .05. The mediation of anticipated functional congruity is supported if considering that the value zero is not included within the confidence interval (.002, .054), but seems only marginally supported if considering the Sobel test result at the $p < .10$ level . According to Hair et al. (2014a), a VAF value under .20 as in the indirect effect of anticipated functional congruity is evidence to "conclude that (almost) no mediation takes place" (p. 225). However, the VAFs between .20 and .80 for the other anticipated needs congruity constructs indicate partial mediation effects, which is corroborated by the statistically significant direct effect between venturesomeness and visit intention even after estimating the model including the mediating constructs (Hair et al., 2010; 2014a).

Table 14. Mediation Effects on Intention to Visit the Mature Destination

Indirect Paths	Size of V. A. F.	C. I. = 95%		Sobel Test (p value)[a]	Effect Supported
		Lower	Upper		
All four mediators	N/A	.222	.350	N/A	Yes
Venturesomeness → Epistemic →Visit Int.	.377	.032	.142	.003	Yes
Venturesomeness → Emotional →Visit Int.	.235	.002	.093	.048	Yes
Venturesomeness → Functional →Visit Int.	.147	.002	.054	.060	Marginally
Venturesomeness → Social →Visit Int.	.484	.084	.187	.000	Yes

Note: C.I. = confidence intervals (bias corrected); V.A.F. = Variance accounted for; N/A = Not applicable
[a] =Two-tailed probability.

The test of hypotheses H4b and H5b is based on the results shown in Table 15, which includes the SEM effects of venturesomeness and the four anticipated need congruity constructs on intention to visit Cancun. The hypothesized effect of anticipated functional congruity (hypothesis H4b: $\beta = .111$, $p < .05$) on intention to visit Cancun is not stronger than the effects of anticipated epistemic congruity ($\beta = .173$, $p < .01$) and anticipated emotional congruity ($\beta = .128$, $p < .05$). However, the effect of anticipated social congruity (hypothesis H5b: $\beta = .283$, $p < .001$) on intention to visit Cancun is stronger than the effect of anticipated epistemic congruity and anticipated emotional congruity, as expected.

The effect from venturesomeness on intention to visit Cancun is statistically significant ($\gamma = .141$, $< .01$) and lower than the effect of venturesomeness without mediators ($\gamma = .445$, $p < .001$) shown in Table 11, indicating a partial mediation effect in the complete model. Overall, the model with mediating constructs for Cancun accounts for 44 percent of the variance explained in the independent variable, compared to 20 percent in the unmediated model reported in Table 11.

Table 15. Predicting Effects on Intention to Visit the Mature Destination

Direct Paths	Standardized Coefficient	Significance (p value)[a]	Effect Supported
Venturesomeness → Visit Intent	.141	.003	Yes
Epistemic → Visit Intent	.173	.002	Yes
Emotional → Visit Intent	.128	.044	Yes
Functional → Visit Intent	.111	.045	Yes
Social → Visit Intent	.283	.000	Yes
Total variance explained = .441			

[a] =Two-tailed probability.

In sum, the estimation of PLS-SEM paths and the test of mediation effects for the Isla Holbox and Cancun inner models reveal that five hypotheses are corroborated. Table 16 summarizes each of the hypothesis and the conclusions based on the data analysis.

Table 16. Summary of Hypotheses Testing

Research Hypotheses	Results
H1: The effect of venturesomeness on intention to visit a novel destination will be positive and stronger than the effect of venturesomeness on intention to visit a mature destination.	Not Corroborated
H2a: The mediation effects of anticipated epistemic congruity will increase the explanation power of venturesomeness on intention to visit a novel destination.	Corroborated
H2b: Anticipated epistemic congruity will have a stronger effect on the intention to visit a novel destination than anticipated functional and social congruity.	Not Corroborated
H3a: The mediation effects of anticipated emotional congruity will increase the explanation power of venturesomeness on intention to visit a novel destination.	Corroborated
H3b: Anticipated emotional congruity will have a stronger effect on the intention to visit a novel destination than anticipated functional and social congruity.	Not Corroborated
H4a: The mediation effects of anticipated functional congruity will increase the explanation power of venturesomeness on intention to visit a mature destination.	Corroborated
H4b: Anticipated functional congruity will have a stronger effect on the intention to visit a mature destination than anticipated epistemic and emotional congruity.	Not Corroborated
H5a: The mediation effects of anticipated social congruity will increase the explanation power of venturesomeness on intention to visit a mature destination.	Corroborated
H5b: Anticipated social congruity will have a stronger effect on the intention to visit a mature destination than anticipated epistemic and emotional congruity.	Corroborated

Lastly, the models of the two destinations were estimated controlling for demographic variables: age, educational level, and household income. A number of additional independent variables were also included to observe their predictive effects: involvement with leisure travel (Beerli, Díaz Meneses, and Moreno Gil, 2007), familiarity with the destination (Park and Jang, 2013), perceived risk at the destination and at the country (Lepp and Gibson, 2008), and prior knowledge of international destinations (Sharifpour, Walters, and Ritchie, 2014a; Sharifpour et al., 2014b). As shown in Table 17, the effects of some of those variables were found statistically significant and increase the total explained variance of the intention to visit the destinations. Also, results show the reduced effects of some of the anticipated needs congruity constructs when incorporating other variables in the models. Further discussion and conclusions of these findings are provided in Chapter 5.

Table 17. Effects on Visit Intention Controlling for Other Variables

Predicting Variables	Novel Destination Model		Mature Destination Model	
	Standardized Coefficient	**Significance (p value)[a]**	**Standardized Coefficient**	**Significance (p value)[a]**
Venturesomeness	.038	.408	**.099**	**.024**
Anticipated epistemic congruity	**.181**	**.001**	.102	.067
Anticipated emotional congruity	**.199**	**.001**	.092	.137
Anticipated functional congruity	-.051	.340	.094	.067
Anticipated social congruity	**.160**	**.002**	**.316**	**.000**
Age	**-.099**	**.012**	**-.077**	**.031**
Education level	**.105**	**.007**	**.090**	**.021**
Household income	-.063	.132	-.052	.163
Involvement with leisure travel	-.054	.154	**.088**	**.020**
Past visits to destination	.010	.711	-.035	.367
Familiarity with destination	**.188**	**.000**	**.204**	**.000**
Perceived risk (destination)	**-.266**	**.000**	**-.194**	**.000**
Perceived risk (Mexico)	.069	.085	-.052	.166
Knowledge of international destinations	**.094**	**.043**	**-.104**	**.025**
Variance explained (Visit Intention)	**R^2= .467**		**R^2= .548**	

Note: statistically significant effects are shown in bold ($p < .05$)
[a] =Two-tailed probability

Additional Analysis of Consumption Needs

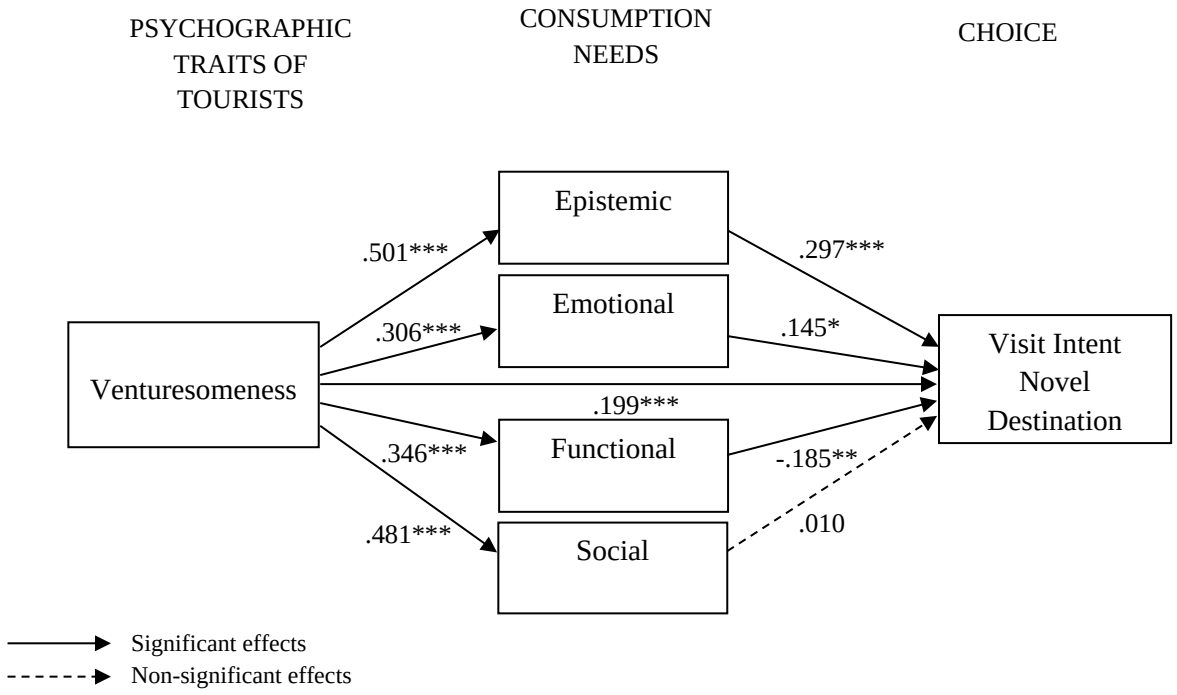
Although not formally postulated in the research hypotheses, this study assumed that operationalizing consumption needs as anticipated congruity measures allows a better capture of the effects of consumption needs on visit intentions according to the expectancy-value paradigm. Thus, as a way to compare the explanatory power of consumption needs and anticipated needs congruity as predictors of behavioral intentions, two additional SEM models were estimated for the destinations under study including respondents' consumption needs as mediating constructs (Sheth, Newman, and Gross, 1991a, 1991b). As can be seen in Part I of the survey in the Appendix, the four consumption needs were measured without making any reference to Isla Holbox or Cancun, in order to capture the extent to which respondents manifest having each consumption need with no congruity effect involved. These consumption needs measures were

used to estimate the structural models in the same way as was done previously to test the research hypotheses.

An assessment of construct validity in the two destinations models showed that all of the composite reliability values were over .70, while all AVEs were greater than .50 and higher than the squared correlations between all the constructs, indicating a sufficient convergent and discriminant validity as required in PLS-SEM outer models (Fornell and Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2010, 2011, 2012; Kerlinger and Lee, 2000). The same PLS-SEM inner model estimation procedures described previously to test the research hypotheses were performed to estimate the models with consumption needs as mediating constructs. SmartPLS was used following the bias-corrected and accelerated (BCa) bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 subsamples to determine statistical significance (Hair et al., 2014a, 2014b). Also, the PROCESS macro was run to conduct the tests of multiple mediation effects using 5,000 bootstrap samples and 95% bias-corrected confidence intervals (Cheung and Lau, 2008; Preacher and Hayes, 2008). Sobel tests and VAF values were also employed to complement the assessments of mediation effects (Hair et al., 2014a; Sobel, 1982).

In order to analyze participants' attitudes and behavioral intentions towards Isla Holbox, a structural model including the four consumption needs as mediators was estimated. The PLS-SEM results revealed that the relationships between venturesomeness and the four consumption needs constructs are statistically significant. Also, it was found that the dependent variable intention to visit Isla Holbox is predicted by three of the consumption needs: epistemic, emotional, and functional. The paths coefficients of the structural model estimation for Isla Holbox are shown in Figure 15.

Figure 15. Path Results of Consumption Needs Model for Novel Destination



*p <.05, **p <.01. ***p <.001.

The R^2 values for the endogenous constructs in the Isla Holbox model are: visit intentions =.204, epistemic needs =.251, emotional needs =.094, functional needs =.119, and social needs =.231. As mentioned before, the R^2 values of most mediating variables and the target dependent variable represent reasonable levels of explained variance considering the usual R^2 results in disciplines such as consumer behavior (Hair et al., 2011). As can be seen in Figure 15, eight out of the nine hypothesized paths are statistically significant, indicating that variables were appropriately specified in the model. The Q^2 values were estimated using blindfolding and omission distance set to 7, resulting in all values above 0 as required to verify predictive relevance (Hair et al., 2011, 2012).

The results of mediation tests for the Isla Holbox model are reported in Table 18. With respect to the complete model, the value zero is not included in the confidence interval of the Isla

Holbox model with the four consumption needs mediators (.071, .205), indicating that at least one mediation effect is present through any of the mediators. An individual examination of the confidence intervals of epistemic needs (.090, .214), emotional needs (.010, .084), and functional needs (-.117, -.021) showed that mediation effects are supported because the value of zero is not included in the any of the intervals. In addition, Sobel tests showed results under .05, indicating a statistical significance. On the other hand, the mediation of social needs is not supported because the value zero is included within the confidence interval (-.053, .063) and the Sobel test yielded a non-significant value of .855. The VAF values indicate the presence of small to moderate partial mediation effects (Hair et al., 2014a).

Table 18. Mediation Effects of Consumption Needs for the Novel Destination

Indirect Paths	Size of V. A. F.	C. I. = 95%		Sobel Test (p value)[a]	Effect Supported
		Lower	Upper		
All four mediators	N/A	.071	.205	N/A	Yes
Venturesomeness → Epistemic →Visit Int.	.427	.090	.214	.000	Yes
Venturesomeness → Emotional →Visit Int.	.182	.010	.084	.020	Yes
Venturesomeness → Functional →Visit Int.	.474	-.117	-.021	.004	Yes
Venturesomeness → Social →Visit Int.	.023	-.053	.063	.855	No

Note: CI = confidence intervals (bias corrected); V.A.F. = Variance accounted for; N/A = Not applicable
[a] =Two-tailed probability.

Table 19 reports the SEM effects of venturesomeness and the four consumption needs on intention to visit Isla Holbox. The effects of epistemic needs ($\beta = .297$, $p < .001$) and emotional needs ($\beta = .145$, $p < .05$) on intention to visit Isla Holbox are positive and stronger than the effect of functional needs ($\beta = -.185$, $p < .01$) and social needs ($\beta = .010$, $p = .869$). The effect of venturesomeness on intention to visit Isla Holbox is statistically significant ($\gamma = .199$, $p < .001$) and lower than the effects of venturesomeness without mediators ($\gamma = .360$, $p < .001$) shown in Table 11, indicating a partial mediation effect of consumption needs. Overall, the model with consumption needs as mediating constructs for Isla Holbox accounts for 20 percent of the

variance explained in the independent variable, compared to 13 percent in the unmediated model reported in Table 11.

Table 19. Predicting Effects of Consumption Needs for the Novel Destination

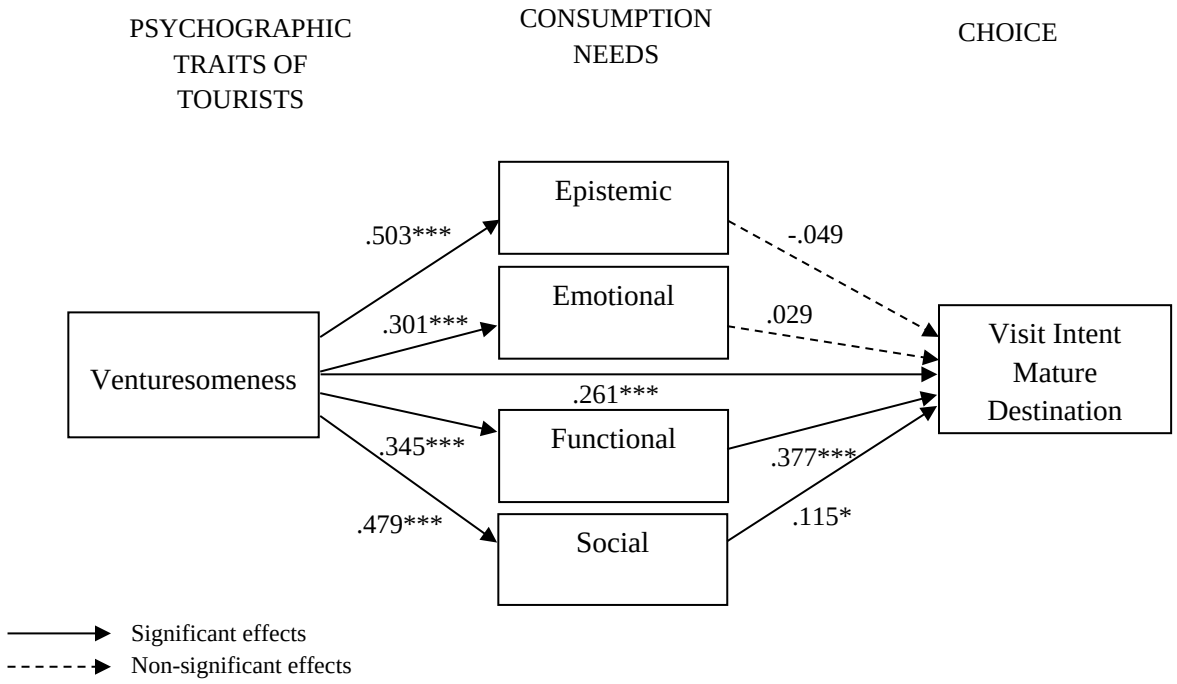
Direct Paths	Standardized Coefficient	Significance (p value)[a]	Effect Supported
Venturesomeness → Visit Intent	.199	.000	Yes
Epistemic → Visit Intent	.297	.000	Yes
Emotional → Visit Intent	.145	.014	Yes
Functional → Visit Intent	-.185	.006	Yes
Social → Visit Intent	.010	.869	No
Total variance explained = .204			

[a] =Two-tailed probability.

In order to analyze participants' attitudes and behavioral intentions towards Cancun, a structural model including the four consumption needs as mediators was estimated. The PLS-SEM results revealed that the relationships between venturesomeness and the four consumption needs constructs are statistically significant. However, it was found that the dependent variable intention to visit Cancun is predicted by only two of the consumption needs: functional and social. Figure 16 shows the paths coefficients of the structural model estimation for Cancun.

The R^2 values for the endogenous constructs in the Cancun model are: visit intentions =.354, epistemic needs =.253, emotional needs =.090, functional needs =.119, and social needs =.229. As mentioned previously, the R^2 values of most mediating variables and the target dependent variable represent reasonable levels of explained variance considering the usual R^2 results in consumer behavior research (Hair et al., 2011). As can be seen in Figure 16, seven out of the nine hypothesized paths are statistically significant, indicating that variables were appropriately specified in the model. The Q2 values were estimated using blindfolding and omission distance set to 7, resulting in all values above 0 as required to verify predictive relevance (Hair et al., 2011, 2012).

Figure 16. Path Results of Consumption Needs Model for Mature Destination



*p <.05, **p <.01. ***p <.001.

The results of the mediation tests for the Cancun model are reported in Table 20. In testing the complete model, the value zero is not included in the confidence interval of the Cancun model with four consumption needs as mediators (.099, .237), indicating that at least one mediation effect is present through any of the mediators. An individual examination of the confidence intervals of functional needs (.083, .188) and social needs (.005, .113) showed that mediation effects are supported because the value of zero is not included in the any of the intervals and Sobel tests yielded significance results under .05. However, the value zero is found within the confidence intervals of epistemic needs (-.081, .028) and emotional needs (-.021, .043), while the Sobel tests yielded non-significant values of .363 and .585, respectively. The VAF values indicate the presence of small to moderate partial mediation effects (Hair et al., 2014a).

Table 21 reports the SEM effects of venturesomeness and the four consumption needs on intention to visit Cancun. The effect of functional needs (β = .377, p < .001) and social needs (β = .115, p < .05) on intention to visit Cancun are stronger than the effects of epistemic needs (β = -.049, p = .373) and emotional needs (β = .029, p = .581).

Table 20. Mediation Effects of Consumption Needs for the Mature Destination

Indirect Paths	Size of V. A. F.	C. I. = 95% Lower	C. I. = 95% Upper	Sobel Test (p value)[a]	Effect Supported
All four mediators	N/A	.099	.237	N/A	Yes
Venturesomeness → Epistemic →Visit Int.	.104	-.081	.028	.363	No
Venturesomeness → Emotional →Visit Int.	.032	-.021	.043	.585	No
Venturesomeness → Functional →Visit Int.	.332	.083	.188	.000	Yes
Venturesomeness → Social →Visit Int.	.174	.005	.113	.025	Yes

Note: C.I. = confidence intervals (bias corrected); V.A.F. = Variance accounted for; N/A = Not applicable
[a] =Two-tailed probability.

The effect from venturesomeness on intention to visit Cancun is statistically significant (γ = .261, < .001) and lower than the effect of venturesomeness without mediators (γ = .445, p < .001) shown in Table 11, indicating a partial mediation effect of consumption needs. Overall, the model with consumption needs as mediating constructs for Cancun accounts for 35 percent of the variance explained in the independent variable, compared to 20 percent in the unmediated model reported in Table 11.

Table 21. Predicting Effects of Consumption Needs for the Mature Destination

Direct Paths	Standardized Coefficient	Significance (p value)[a]	Effect Supported
Venturesomeness → Visit Intent	.261	.000	Yes
Epistemic → Visit Intent	-.049	.373	No
Emotional → Visit Intent	.029	.581	No
Functional → Visit Intent	.377	.000	Yes
Social → Visit Intent	.115	.046	Yes
Total variance explained = .354			

[a] =Two-tailed probability.

In sum, the estimation of PLS-SEM paths specifying consumption needs as mediators revealed that the variance explained in intentions to visit Isla Holbox (R^2 = .204) is lower than then variance explained accounted in the model with anticipated needs congruity (R^2 = .335) as shown in Table 13. Similarly, the variance explained by consumption needs on intention to visit Cancun was lower (R^2 = .354) than the variance accounted for in the model with anticipated needs congruity (R^2 = .441) as shown in Table 15. Therefore, the explanatory power of consumption needs is greater when operationalizing consumption needs as congruity measures based on expectancy-value principles.

In the next chapter, theoretical and managerial implications of the research results are discussed and conclusions are drawn. In addition, limitations of the study are presented and suggestion for further research are offered.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

In this final chapter, the overall contribution of this research to the literature is presented, and the major findings of the study results are discussed. Theoretical implications are offered with respect to the theoretical framework employed and the extant body of knowledge in destination choice research. Also, managerial recommendations are presented as indicated by the study results. Finally, the limitations of the study are discussed and potential areas for further scholarly research are suggested.

Overall Contribution to the Literature

The following research contribution to the literature is discussed in two parts: based on the findings from the estimation of models with anticipated need congruity constructs, and based on the comparison with findings from the estimation of models using consumption needs. The first part is presented according to the results of the hypothesized relationships, and the second with respect to the results of some relationships that were not hypothesized but are relevant to this area in the tourism and consumer research literature.

Results from Models with Anticipated Needs Congruity

The results of testing hypothesis H1 indicated that the construct venturesomeness is not as good a predictor of intentions to visit the underdeveloped destination, Isla Holbox, as it is a predictor of intentions to visit the developed destination, Cancun. In the models estimated without mediation effects, venturesomeness shows stronger effects and greater variance

explained in intention to visit Cancun ($\gamma = .445$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .198$) than intention to visit Isla Holbox ($\gamma = .360$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .129$). Therefore, the first contribution of this research to the tourism marketing literature is that no support is found for one of the major postulates of Plog's (1974) and Butler's (1980) models in the sense that the higher the venturesomeness, the higher the preference for a novel, underdeveloped destination. Contrary to past research findings (George, Henthorne, and Williams, 2013; Griffith and Albanese, 1996; Williams, Ellis and Daniels, 1986), the results of this study show that tourists' degree of venturesomeness is a better predictor of their intention to visit a mature, developed destination.

The tests of the pairs of hypotheses H2, H3, H4, and H5 for the Isla Holbox and Cancun models using anticipated needs congruity measures yielded mixed results. Anticipated epistemic congruity and anticipated emotional congruity were found as mediators in the relation between venturesomeness and intention to visit Isla Holbox, corroborating hypotheses H2a and H3a, respectively (Table 12). Similarly, anticipated functional congruity and anticipated social congruity were found as mediators in the relation between venturesomeness and intention to visit Cancun, corroborating hypotheses H4a and H5a, respectively (Table 14). Therefore, the second contribution of this research to the tourism marketing literature is that support is found for the significant mediating role of anticipated need congruity constructs in the relationship between venturesomeness and destination preference. Specifically, the greater total variance explained found when using mediating constructs (Isla Holbox's $R^2 = .335$, Cancun's $R^2 = .441$) than when using venturesomeness alone (Isla Holbox's $R^2 = .129$, Cancun's $R^2 = .198$) indicate that anticipated need congruity increases the predictive power of Plog's (1974) personality-based psychographics on behavioral intentions.

However, the expected strength of the relationships between the mediating congruity constructs and intentions to visit the two destinations was not corroborated for most of the hypothesized effects, except for one (Tables 13 and 15). Hypotheses H2b and H3b were not supported because the effects of anticipated epistemic congruity ($\beta = .246$, $p < .01$) and anticipated emotional congruity ($\beta = .160$, $p < .05$) on intentions to visit Isla Holbox were not stronger than the effects of anticipated social congruity ($\beta = .255$, $p < .001$). This indicates that travelers who visit underdeveloped destinations not only expect to fulfill a desire for novelty and to feel emotions, but they mostly want to project their identities to others by visiting the place. Hypothesis H4b was not supported because the effect of anticipated functional congruity ($\beta = .111$, $p < .05$) on intentions to visit Cancun was not stronger than the effects of anticipated epistemic congruity ($\beta = .173$, $p < .01$) and anticipated emotional congruity ($\beta = .128$, $p < .05$). This suggests that the role of tourism facilities and infrastructure is less important than novelty- and emotional-related benefits when visiting a developed destination. Only hypothesis H5b was supported since the effect of anticipated social congruity ($\beta = .283$, $p < .001$) was stronger than the effects of anticipated epistemic congruity and anticipated emotional congruity, in line with the importance of symbolic, self-expressive attributes that characterize famous vacation resorts.

Interestingly, there is a common pattern in the magnitude of the path coefficients from the four anticipated congruity constructs to behavioral intentions in both destinations models: anticipated social congruity shows the strongest effects, followed by the effects of anticipated epistemic congruity, the effects of anticipated emotional congruity, and lastly the effects of anticipated functional congruity. In other words, the same pattern of effects from anticipated congruity constructs is observed on intentions to visit Isla Holbox and Cancun, regardless of their degree of development: the first motivation of travelers is to express their self-images and

interact with similar people, then their next interest is to learn and explore new environments, followed by the desire to experience emotions, and the lowest importance is placed on the destinations' functional attributes. Therefore, the third contribution of this research to the tourism marketing literature is that it presents evidence of a similar hierarchy of consumption needs expected to be satisfied by tourists when visiting underdeveloped and developed destinations. While past studies used consumption needs in tourism destination contexts (e.g., Denys and Mendes, 2014; Tapachai and Waryszak, 2000), this research is the first to contrast the magnitude and strength of the effects that consumption needs have on behavioral intentions.

As a result of testing the research model and responding the research questions of this investigation, it can be concluded that not much difference exists in tourists preference as destinations evolve, at least from the perspective of the influence of the congruity constructs studied in this research. This conclusion does not mean that tourists' decisions to travel to destinations with different degrees of development are made indiscriminately or arbitrarily. Instead, it seems that tourists' preferences for underdeveloped or developed destinations are determined more by other variables, such as tourists' lifestyles and specific activities at the destination, distance and cost of the various alternatives under consideration, influence of the media and word-of-mouth recommendations, and other situational factors that were not studied in this research.

Comparison of Anticipated Needs Congruity and Consumption Needs

As can be seen in the results of the models using consumption needs alone, the behavioral intentions for Isla Holbox (Tables 18 and 19) and for Cancun (Tables 20 and 21) are determined by mediation effects more closely aligned with the effects initially hypothesized for anticipated needs congruity constructs. As depicted in Figure 15, intention to visit Isla Holbox is predicted

by the positive effects of epistemic needs ($\beta = .297$, $p < .001$) and emotional needs ($\beta = .145$, $p < .05$), but negatively by functional needs ($\beta = -.185$, $p < .01$) and not predicted by social needs ($\beta = .010$, $p = .869$). Figure 16 shows that intention to visit Cancun is predicted by the positive effects of functional needs ($\beta = .377$, $p < .001$) and social needs ($\beta = .115$, $p < .05$), but not by epistemic needs ($\beta = -.049$, $p = .373$) nor emotional needs ($\beta = .029$, $p = .581$). In other words, the hypothesized relationships that led this research seem to be reflected in consumers' attitudes only when examining their consumption needs, but not when measuring the degree of expected congruity of those needs with explicit reference to the destinations in the consideration set.

The pattern of significant mediations and predictive relationships from consumption needs on behavioral intentions provides some support to the perspective adopted in this study based on the role of needs in different types of travelers as suggested by Plog (1974, 1990, 1991b, 1995, 2002, 2004). However, the results of the models using anticipated needs congruity constructs call for further consideration about the way in which needs manifest in consumers' travel decisions. Potential explanations for those different results may be found first in the measurement itself, which although related to the same domain of consumption needs, were operationalized from two different perspectives, and second in the predominance of a set of basic needs underlying human behavior across all contexts as suggested by self-determination theory (Deci and Ryan, 1985).

First, the operationalization and measurement of constructs in consumer research yield different results depending on whether potential consequences of actions are considered or not. For example, the theory of planned behavior (TPB) introduced by Ajzen (1985, 1991) improved the understanding and prediction of behavioral intentions by measuring attitudes in relation to the outcomes of the behavior, such as the benefits expected in a product, rather than just the

attitudes towards a product as with previous theories (Solomon, 2012). Meta-analytic studies of the TPB have shown similar results in other disciplines (e.g., Hagger, Chatzisarantis, and Biddle, 2002). Thus, since this study followed the approach of TPB, it is feasible that the way in which consumption needs were conceptualized as congruity constructs and measured with explicit relation to the expected consequences of visiting a given destination is what accounts for the variations in the results obtained.

Second, the strongest influence of anticipated social congruity as a predictor of behavioral intentions in both the Isla Holbox and Cancun models may be explained by the influence of basic needs described in the self-determination theory (SDT) developed in the field of psychology (Deci and Ryan, 1985, 2000; Ryan and Deci, 2008). SDT postulates that studying human motivation requires the consideration of three very basic psychological needs –for competence, autonomy, and relatedness– which are essential to understand goal-directed behavior and "provide the regnant causes of intentional actions" (Ryan and Deci, 2008, p. 654). SDT views these basic needs as innate and universal, but recognizes that there is considerable variation in individual surface behaviors as influenced by immediate goals, beliefs, rituals, and social settings. However, the basic needs must be satisfied for individuals to experience optimal psychological development, performance, and well-being within any domain and across cultural contexts (Ryan and Deci, 2008). As a macro theory of motivation, SDT has proven to be useful in a variety of disciplines and new research areas (Ryan and Deci, 2008), including marketing and consumer behavior (e.g., Mosteller and Mathwick, 2014; Sweeney et al., 2014).

One of the three SDT needs, relatedness, appears to be associated with the domain of social needs investigated in this research. Relatedness refers to the desire to feel connected to others with respect to the larger social entity (Deci and Ryan, 2000). According to Baumeister

and Leary (1995), enough evidence exists to suggest that the need to form social relations and maintain interactions with others is a powerful, fundamental, and pervasive motivation in human behavior. Thus, if there is ultimately a deep structure of basic psychological needs as outlined in SDT and they indeed extend to all types of decision-making contexts (Ryan and Deci, 2008), including consumption, then it is possible that relatedness explains the role of anticipated social congruity as the strongest determinant of destination choice. Under this perspective, anticipated social congruity may be seen as a context-specific consumption need to be fulfilled in a travel decision situation, which is in turn determined by a more underlying, predominant TSD need for relatedness. In this respect, the TPB framework in this research has been shown to be nomologically integrated with SDT (Gucciardi & Jackson, 2015; Hagger and Chatzisarantis, 2009; Hagger, Chatzisarantis, and Harris, 2006), suggesting that SDT basic needs are permanent while TPB attitudes are contextual (Hagger, Chatzisarantis, and Harris, 2006). Also, research has demonstrated that self-expression, identity-related constructs similar to the social needs in this study greatly improve the prediction of consumer behavior when using the TPB approach (Smith et al., 2008).

Therefore, it is possible that anticipated need congruity constructs are able to capture psychological domains that have more proximity to actual decision making and behavior, while consumption needs only capture the domains at a more superficial, less determinant level.

Theoretical Contribution

This research contributes to the extant body of knowledge in the tourism marketing literature by examining the predictive validity of the well-known, highly cited psychographic model proposed by Plog (1974, 2002). The results of this study showed that venturesomeness is a better predictor of tourists' preference for a developed destination, rather than preference for

undeveloped destinations as argued by Plog. This finding was further evaluated by inspecting the correlation between venturesomeness and the tourist roles conceptualized by Cohen (1972), who identified four tourist roles that are theoretically parallel to the allocentrism-psychocentrism continuum: drifters, explorers, individual mass travelers, and organized mass travelers. Contrary to expectations, the scale assessing Cohen's tourist roles as operationalized by Lepp and Gibson (2003, 2008) showed a statistically significant but negative correlation with venturesomeness (Pearson's $r = -.098$, $p < .05$), indicating that the venturesomeness scale is more associated with Cohen's organized mass travelers, who tend to prefer well-developed destinations.

As described before, one of the scale items employed to measure venturesomeness was excluded from the analysis because it seemed tautological, with a wording much similar to what it intends to predict (Hunt, 2010). Apparently, the issue relates to an observation made by Gnoth (1997) noting that Plog's typology would be tautological if the allocentrism-psychocentrism categories are initially derived from tourists' observed behavior, and then that same category-membership is regarded as the reason for the observed behavior. Therefore, the removal of the tautological item in this research has corrected a deficiency of the construct's measurement that had not been done previously. Sönmez and Graefe (1998) reported the scale's low reliability, but other researchers continued using it without modifications, which possibly influenced past study results that supported the predictive validity of venturesomeness. In this respect, Madrigal (1995) noted that "despite its widespread application in the private sector, the psychometric properties of the scale have not yet been subjected to rigorous examination in the academic literature because of the proprietary nature of the scale" (p. 138). Similarly, Pearce (2011) considered that Plog's model's "genesis in consultancy work prevented some of the close scrutiny which followed its ongoing academic use" for years, without appropriately addressing

doubts “in terms of the transparency and adequacy of its measurement” (p. 44). However, it should be noted that this study’s results are based on the venturesomeness scale referred in Plog (1995), while other earlier, non-published versions of the scale were also used before.

One potential explanation for the inability of venturesomeness to predict destination choice as postulated by Plog (1974) is that the model may be outdated to explain current travel phenomena. The allocentrism-psychocentrism model was developed at the end of the 1960s, when the tourist industry was very different from contemporary tourism (Jackson, White, and Schmierer, 2000). With limited air travel in those years, the further the distance from home, the more novel and allocentric a destination would be perceived. However, as a result of modern air travel and increased knowledge of destinations through the media and word-of-mouth from friends and relatives, nowadays overseas destinations are perceived as more familiar and the model is not accurate anymore in predicting tourists’ choices (Jackson, White, and Schmierer, 2000). According to Sheth and Sisodia (1999), many marketing models and concepts from past decades are not well suited to study the behavior of the more complex and diverse consumers of the present, because those models “were created in an era of relative demographic homogeneity” and “in the context of a mass-production, mass-consumption society” (p. 79). As noted by Butler (2014), “in earlier times tourists at resorts were more homogeneous, mostly having a common origin and socio-economic characteristics”, a situation that has changed dramatically “as tourism has become more fragmented and resorts more complex and varied” (p. 220).

Although this study did not corroborate the role of venturesomeness as a predictor of destination preference in the directionality suggested by Plog (1974), the results call for the consideration of other characteristics that were indeed corroborated by the model. For example, as shown in Figure 12, the psychographic profile of the sample of consumers in the study

approximates to a normal distribution according to the allocentrism-psychocentrism continuum as described by Plog (2001, 2002). In addition, the findings show that venturesomeness has a statistically significant relationship with visit intention, contrasting with past research in which no statistical significant association was found at all (e.g., Jackson, White and Schmierer, 2000; Lee-Hoxter and Lester, 1987, 1988; Smith, 1990a, 1990b). Therefore, the venturesomeness construct actually has some predictive power and, after its revision and reconceptualization, perhaps may be used as a psychographic variable in destination choice models.

As noted before, predicting destination preference by incorporating anticipated need congruity as mediating constructs produced results inconsistent with Plog's assertions (1974, 2001, 2002). However, the estimation of the model using consumption needs alone revealed a pattern of relationships more in line with the hypotheses proposed for the congruity effects, in which the needs that Plog described as associated to allocentrics (epistemic and emotional) and psychocentrics (functional and social) were found to positively influence travelers' attitudes towards Isla Holbox and Cancun, respectively. One potential explanation for these findings is that the consumption needs associated with the psychographic characteristics in Plog's model may reflect consumers' *ideal* destinations at an more "abstract" level, while the anticipated congruity of needs may be more conative, predicting *actual* destinations at a more "concrete" level when specific attributes expected at a destination are considered (emphasis added). For example, Litvin (2006) compared the destinations actually visited by tourists versus their preferred, ideal destinations and reported that while Plog's model "proved ineffective as a predictor of travel behavior, it conclusively helped us to understand people's travel aspirations" (p. 252). More recently, Litvin and Smith (2016) corroborated some psychographic characteristics of Plog's typology in a large panel of consumers, but found that the model was

not useful in predicting actual destination choice because most travelers tended to visit destinations classified as "psychocentric", regardless of their degree of venturesomeness. Thus, further analysis and revision of the venturesomeness' dimensions and domain are necessary if it is to be used in future research.

Importantly, this research shows that the expected satisfaction of the four consumption needs mediates the relationship between consumers' psychographics on destination choice (Tables 12 and 14). Early studies of tourist behavior placed higher emphasis on psychographics (e.g., Abbey, 1979; Schul and Crompton, 1983), but this research demonstrates that consumption needs and the expectation of satisfying them are better predictors of destination preference, as suggested by some authors (Hsu, Cai, and Li, 2010; Johar and Sirgy, 1995; Pizam and Calantone, 1987; Yankelovich and Meer; 2006). The total variance explained in behavioral intentions for both destinations models, Isla Holbox and Cancun, was higher when anteceded by anticipated need congruity (Tables 13 and 15) than when anteceded by personality-based psychographics alone (Table 11). While past works studied the congruity of Sheth, Newman and Gross' (1991a, 1991b) needs through qualitative approaches (e.g., Tapachai and Waryszak, 2000), descriptive statistical methods (e.g., Denys and Mendes, 2014), or assessing post-visit tourist's evaluations (e.g., Bosnjak et al., 2011), this study contributes to the tourism marketing theory by examining tourist's pre-visit attitudes as predictors of destination preference using regression-based statistical analysis, extending the body of knowledge about the congruency between tourists' needs and destinations' expected attributes to better understand destination choice.

Practical Contribution

Various managerial implications are drawn from this research. For example, specific recommendations for practitioners can be derived from the findings related to the specific effects

of anticipated epistemic, emotional, functional, and social congruity on intentions to visit the destinations. Also, a number of suggestions can be offered based on the analysis of the research models that included other non-hypothesized variables to predict tourists' behavioral intentions.

With respect to the results of anticipated need congruity as determinants of behavioral intentions, the study offers insights for destination management organizations (DMOs) and other practitioners in the tourism industry. For example, travelers' visit intentions are not mainly driven by the functional attributes, hospitality facilities, nor the physical infrastructure available at a resort destination. Anticipated functional congruity did not have an effect on intentions to visit Isla Holbox, and was the least influential in predicting intentions to visit Cancun. This suggests that DMOs and tourism service providers should not regard the functional, physical attributes of their products as the sole reasons that will, by themselves, attract tourists to their destinations and businesses. Instead, it seems that the facilities and infrastructure only provide the basis upon which the tourist's experience is built, consistent with Vargo and Lusch's (2004, 2008) service-dominant logic in which operand resources (e.g., goods) are the means to generate more valued and meaningful operant resources (e.g., customer experiences), which constitute competitive advantages in the current market economy (Pine and Gilmore, 1999). Thus, practitioners should design tourism products through an "experience engineering" approach (Tussyadiah, 2014; Zeithaml, Bitner, and Gremler, 2013), looking beyond mere tangible attributes and considering how these significantly add to the overall tourist's experience (Scott, Laws, and Boksberger, 2009), aiming to satisfy the social, epistemic, and emotional needs.

As demonstrated by the results of the two destinations under study, traveler's behavioral intentions are greatly determined by the extent to which a resort destination is expected to serve as a mean to project traveler's identity to others, to satisfy curiosity and the search of novelty,

and to provide emotional experiences. Therefore, it is recommended that tourism practitioners and DMOs conduct audits of core resources and attractions to identify the distinctive products and services that the destination offers (see Ritchie and Crouch, 2003, 2011). The results of the product inventory audits should identify areas of improvement or opportunities for new product or service development, and provide the basis on which the destination's market segmentation strategy is built. In this way, marketing managers and DMOs will be able to identify the segments of travelers to be targeted according to the dominant needs revealed in this study.

With respect to the satisfaction of social needs, marketing managers should position the destination through tourism products that convey the self-concept image and lifestyle of the desired target segments (e.g., rough and adventurous vs. classy and sophisticated), emphasizing those associations through brand alliances (e.g., co-op advertising), depicting reference and aspirational groups in promotional campaigns (e.g., opinion leaders and endorsers), and using the appropriate distribution channels (e.g., specialty travel agencies). In order to address the satisfaction of epistemic needs, it is necessary that DMOs identify the specific interests of target segments and what new things tourists want to know, such as learning about the local people (e.g., through interacting with them), the history and the culture of area (e.g., archaeological sites and monuments, traditional products and handcrafts), the natural environment and wildlife of the destination (e.g., jungle tours, whale shark watching), unique attractions (e.g., innovative theme parks), or simply having activities not available at their place of origin (e.g., enjoying the beach, practicing water sports). Similarly, the destination's marketing managers should communicate how tourists' emotional needs are fulfilled through the excitement, joy, and pleasure provided by the mix of activities mentioned before and also by other personally memorable experiences (e.g.,

spending time with family and friends), events and entertainment (e.g., festivals, artistic and special events) and other offerings available at the destination (e.g., dining, golf, shopping, spas).

The promotion of the destination should stress that the three consumption needs will be satisfied, rather than just one of them. An effective way to provide cues about the experiences that can be enjoyed at destinations is to devise promotional mix activities that entice consumers through sensory-based stimuli (Krishna, 2010; Pine and Gilmore, 2004). For example, DMOs should set up interactive, vivid websites that show either real-time or recorded videos of the attractions, events, and people at the destination, including the sounds of the natural environment or music heard at the destination. Printed media such as magazines ads and brochures can also include scented strips and materials with the smell of piña coladas, the ocean, or other scents distinctive of the destination. Similarly, face-to-face promotional activities such as booth displays at travel-fairs, airports, and shopping malls can show artifacts representative of the destination, or samples of the food and beverages that are typical of the experiences enjoyed by actually visiting the place. In sum, DMOs marketing activities should be focused on communicating experiences, instead of showing attributes and features only (King, 2002).

As shown in the results in Table 17, the proposed models were tested by including demographic and travel-related variables. By incorporating those control variables, the total variance accounted for in behavioral intentions increased for Isla Holbox (R^2= .467) and Cancun (R^2= .548). While the effects of some anticipated need congruity constructs on behavioral intentions were modified, some control variables revealed a statistically significant impact on tourists' intentions to visit the destinations. For example, intentions to visit both destinations were inversely affected by respondents' age, and positively affected by their educational level. Although these effects were small, they point out the need for DMOs to consider targeting the

younger, more educated segments of consumers as more likely to be attracted to the destinations. In the model for Cancun, results showed that involvement with leisure travel yields low but statistically significant positive effects on visit intentions, suggesting that consumer preferences for visiting Cancun follow a more cognitive, rational decision-making process (Solomon, 2015). Thus, marketing managers need to make sure that information about the destination is persuasive and easy to understand by potential tourists, since their decision to spend a vacation at the destination is personally relevant and will very likely be made after comparing different travel alternatives.

The two destinations' models were examined to determine if there was a difference in effects between tourists who had visited the destinations in the past and those who had not. The path analysis for Isla Holbox and Cancun indicated that there was no statistically significant effect of previous visits on behavioral intentions, a result that was corroborated by conducting a multi-group analysis (MGA) in SmartPLS, as recommended to identify moderation effects in SEM models (Marsh et al., 2012). However, the degree of consumers' familiarity with the destinations was found statistically significant in predicting intentions to visit Isla Holbox and Cancun. In other words, even if consumers had not visited the destinations before, being aware of them through word-of-mouth or marketing communications was a crucial, positive influence on choice (Lee and Tussyadiah, 2012; Milman and Pizam, 1995). This finding highlights the importance of maintaining a continuous, consistent program of promotional activities, which should be a priority in a destination's positioning and branding strategy (Kotler et al., 2016).

According to the model results with control variables, tourists' behavioral intentions are also influenced by the perceived degree of risk at the destination level, but not so much at the country level. In the case of Mexico, the country's image has been negatively affected by

insecurity and drug cartels-related violence events in recent years (Bussey, 2012; Elliot, 2011; Villanueva-Rivas, 2011), particularly in northern border regions of the country (Sánchez-Munguía, 2011). In this study, the sample mean value for risk perception was higher for Mexico as a country ($\overline{x}$ = 5.13) than the mean values for Isla Holbox ($\overline{x}$ = 3.70) and Cancun ($\overline{x}$ = 4.16), suggesting that tourists disassociate the perceived risk of the country when considering visiting a specific destination within that country. Therefore, when destinations enjoy higher levels of safety and security than other regions in the country, destination managers should use those attributes as a point-of-difference (POD) to positively influence the evaluations of potential visitors (Kotler and Keller, 2012). This is especially important considering that travelers' perception of security is a major determinant of a destination's tourism industry performance (Assaf and Josiassen, 2012).

Finally, consumers' knowledge and expertise in traveling to international destinations was found to positively affect intentions to visit Isla Holbox, but inversely affect intentions to visit Cancun. Although these effects were small, they suggest that DMOs need to take into consideration the level of international travel experience of the destination's target markets. For instance, marketing managers of Isla Holbox should focus on consumers with previous international travel experience, while marketing managers of Cancun should concentrate on consumers with no travel experience abroad. Overall, these findings can provide insights for DMOs and practitioners and serve as inputs for planning tailored marketing strategies to appeal the desired segments of travelers.

Limitations and Future Research

This research focuses on the study of the effects of venturesomeness and consumption needs on destination preference, particularly for leisure travel. Because this work aims to

examine the relationship between well-known theoretical frameworks including Plog's (1974) and Sheth, Newman and Gross' (1991a), other personality traits and psychographic factors are not included in the proposed model and hypothesized relations. It is possible that some of the variance not accounted for in the research model is explained by lifestyles characteristics, such as certain activities, interests, and opinions that are influential on travel behavior (Kotler et al., 2016). Also, variables such as travel costs, party size in the trip, travel mode, distance, or available time, are out of the scope of this research since their influence in travel decision-making has already been studied in the extant literature (Sirakaya and Woodside, 2005). As noted by Simonson et al. (2001), "consumer behavior is too complex to be meaningfully captured in a single model" (p. 251). Thus, this investigation specifically concentrates on assessing the effects that Plog's psychographic traits and Sheth, Newman and Gross' consumption needs have on tourists' behavioral intentions. Further research may address some variables that were found as influential in this study, such as perceptions of risks at destinations or tourists' expertise in international travel.

With respect to the methodological approach employed, the findings of this research may be limited in that quantitative, survey-based methods provide snapshots of consumers' decisions, but are not able to capture the nuances and complexities characterizing the "kaleidoscopic nature of consumer culture" (Cayla, Julien, Beers, and Arnould, 2014, p. 56) According to Butler (2014), the experiences purchased by tourists are personal to each one of them in a myriad of ways according to many aspects of the destination. Therefore, qualitative-based research methods may be employed in future studies as a way to triangulate or extend the findings obtained through quantitative research, in order to obtain insights of new heuristic decision-making approaches proposed in the tourism literature (e.g., McCabe, Li, and Chen, 2016).

The tourism destinations employed in the context of this research are beach resorts and coastal destinations, since these constitute the typical tourism areas subject to study under the TALC (Butler, 1980). This is because coastal resorts correspond to the types of destinations that, traditionally, have based their growth on a tourism-driven economy. Therefore, other types of destinations whose development has not been fundamentally driven by tourism activities are out of the scope of this work (i.e., national capitals, industrial or financial centers, etc.) and results may vary by destination type. Future research may replicate the research model with anticipated needs congruity constructs in destination contexts such as the ones mentioned before.

In addition, this study examines the psychographic characteristics and attitudes toward international travel of potential tourists in one specific geographical region. Because Plog's (1974) model was developed and has been tested in North America, the proposed model is analyzed based on data collected from a sample of survey respondents in the United States. Thus, a limitation of this study is that results and conclusions derived from it might not necessarily extend to consumers in countries other than the United States, calling for caution in inferring generalizations. Also, because of the online survey methodology employed, the environment in which participants responded the questionnaire was uncontrollable and their understanding of the instrument items could have been different from what was intended. Similarly, the study does not examine the influence of situational and cultural factors to obtain more nuanced insights about tourists' destination decision-making process. In this regard, further research may be conducted taking into account the limitations of this work, either by studying variables not measured here or by following a different methodological approach.

Some needs that are important for traveler's holiday decisions were not studied in this research, such as self-actualization or escape (Tasci and Ko, forthcoming). Therefore, a potential

avenue for further study is to include such needs operationalized as anticipated need congruity constructs as predictors of destination choice. Similarly, it is possible to explore the relationships between some of the consumption needs in this study and other newly developed constructs. For example, it seems that a linkage exists between tourist's social needs and consumer arrogance (Ruvio and Shoham, 2016), which may provide further insights to understand travel decisions. In addition, researchers could follow up this study by investigating why the effects of tourists' consumption needs on behavioral intentions are different when operationalized as anticipated need congruity constructs.

Lastly, the model and constructs in this study could be analyzed with variations in the model specification. For example, it is possible to study a single research model employing multiple destinations, in which the destinations' degree of development is incorporated as a continuous moderator variable to assess interaction effects. Also, an examination of consumption needs moderating the relationship between pcychographics variables and tourist preference may shed light to better understand destination choice (McGuiggan, 2003). Finally, based on the study findings derived from using the modified venturesomeness scale, future research may focus on the reconceptualization of the construct, examining its validity from theoretical, domain-related aspects and also from the measurement and operationalization perspective.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX

Vacation and Travel Preferences Survey

The purpose of this study is to learn about the vacation travel preferences of consumers, and is part of a dissertation project for the PhD program in Business Administration, functional area in Marketing, at the University of Texas – Pan American. The principal investigator is Oliver Cruz-Milán, Ph.D. candidate in Business Administration, M.Sc. Tourism Marketing, and B.S. Hotel and Restaurant Management, who is under the faculty advisement of Dr. Penny Simpson.

You will be asked to answer a questionnaire about things you do in your daily life, what you like when going on vacations, your perception of different tourism destinations, as well as general demographic information. There are no anticipated risks associated with your participation in this study. The data collected through this survey will only be used for educational-related purposes and will not be given to anyone not directly involved in the research. The study results might be used in academic publications or presentations in the form of aggregate data, without specifically identifying any participant.

Answering the questionnaire should take about 25 minutes of your time and your responses will be treated confidentially. Because the survey contains some pictures, it is suggested that you complete the survey using a personal computer, which allows a better visualization and easier flow than using a smartphone. All survey responses that we receive will be treated confidentially and stored on a secure server. However, given that the surveys can be completed from any computer (e.g., personal, work, school), we are unable to guarantee the security of the computer on which you choose to enter your responses. As a participant in our study, be aware that certain "keylogging" software programs exist that can be used to track or capture data that you enter and/or websites that you visit.

We will greatly appreciate that you complete all the survey questions, because your answers will be more useful for analysis if the survey is complete. However, your participation in this study is voluntary and you may discontinue your participation at any time. If for any reason you decide that you would like to discontinue your participation, simply stop responding the survey. For questions about the project, or to report any adverse effects during or following your participation, don´t hesitate to contact the researcher, Oliver Cruz-Milán at (956) 331-7588, or Dr. Penny Simpson at (956) 665-2829.

This research has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects Protection (IRB) of the University of Texas – Pan American. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant, or if you feel that they were not adequately met by the researcher, please contact the IRB at (956) 665-2889 or irb@utpa.edu. You are also invited to provide anonymous feedback to the IRB by visiting www.utpa.edu/IRBfeedback.

In order to participate, you must be at least 21 years of age. If you are under 21, please inform the researcher. By clicking “Continue to survey” below, you indicate that you are voluntarily agreeing to participate in this study and that the procedures involved have been described to your satisfaction. If you do not wish to participate, click “Exit survey” or simply close the web browser.

___ Exit survey ___ Continue to survey

PART 1

The following are questions about things you do in your daily life and general travel preferences. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements:

	1 = "strongly disagree", 7 = "strongly agree"						
I make decisions quickly and easily rather than deliberating over them.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I have much more energy than most persons my age.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I prefer to go to undiscovered places before big hotels and restaurants are built.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am actively involved in a regular, rigorous fitness program.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

How important are the following to you when deciding where to vacation?

(EPISTEMIC NEEDS)	1 (Not important) to 7 (Extremely important)						
1.- Get an intellectually enriching experience	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.- Achieve a sense of discovery	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.- Explore new things	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4.-Relieve boredom	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5.- Feel rejuvenated	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6.- Get involved with unique activities	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7.- Experience a lot of thrills	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8.- Travel to an adventurous place	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9.-Experience customs different from those in my own environment	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10.- Visit a popular tourist destination (r)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
(EMOTIONAL NEEDS)	1 (Not at all) to 7 (Very much)						
1.- See the beautiful scenery (landscapes, beaches, ocean)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.- Enjoy artistic expressions (architecture, music, other art work)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.- Enjoy fresh and natural odors of the area	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4.- Be at a peaceful and relaxing environment	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5.- See interesting plants and/or animals	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6.- Feel a sense of pleasure	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7.- Feel a sense of delight	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8.- Feel a sense of excitement	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9.- Feel a sense of amazement	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10.- Feel a sense of inspiration	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
(FUNCTIONAL NEEDS)	1 (Not at all) to 7 (Very much)						
1.- Enjoy good amenities for tourists	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.- Receive high-quality hospitality services	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.- Visit a vacation spot with a long history of good reputation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4.- Find good quality in accommodation facilities	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5.- Find accessible transportation to move easily at the destination	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6.- Find good quality and variety of food	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7.- Find good shopping options	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8.-Find great entertainment and amusement options	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9.-Enjoy high standards of hygiene and cleanliness	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
(SOCIAL NEEDS)	1 (Not at all) to 7 (Very much)						
1.- Meet people with similar interests	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

2.- Be at the same place with other tourists you admire and look up to	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.- Project the image of the kind of people you aspire to be	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4.- Visit a place where other people similar to you spend their vacation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5.- Visit a place consistent with how you see yourself	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6.- Be perceived by others as similar to the image of tourists at the destination	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7.- Reflect the kind of person you are	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

PART 2

Imagine that you have the opportunity to go on an all expense-paid vacation by yourself to one of the following: a) Cancun or b) Isla Holbox. Before deciding in which place you would like to take your vacations, please read the following description of the two destinations, and then answer the questions related to each location.

CANCUN

Cancun is a tourism destination located in the north-eastern part of the Yucatan Peninsula in the Mexican Caribbean. For decades, Cancun has been a popular beach resort city where you can do as many or as few activities as you like. In Cancun you can stay in international hotel chains, eat in franchised restaurants, enjoy world-class night clubs, and visit well-known tourist shops. Also, you can be part of group tours for all or part of your vacation, participating in activities scheduled by your tour operator.

ISLA HOLBOX

Isla Holbox is a small island located in north-eastern tip of the Yucatan Peninsula in the Mexican Caribbean. In Isla Holbox there is a fishing village with sand streets, where you can do as many or as few activities as you like. In Isla Holbox you can stay in rustic hut-type accommodations, eat in small family-owned restaurants, and enjoy a relaxed, "nontouristy" atmosphere before other travelers discover the area. Also, you can meet and deal with the people of the culture you are visiting, enjoy the natural surroundings, but avoiding the "mass tourism" type of attraction.

Please answer the following questions

Please rate your overall familiarity with (destination name) according to the following scale.

Not familiar at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Very much familiar*

Have you been to (destination name) on vacations before? [ ] Yes [ ] No

If yes, how many times have you been to (destination name)? _____

[If not,] have you heard other people you know talk about (destination name)? [ ] Yes [ ] No

Please select the option that best answers each question:

To what degree would you like to spend a vacation in (destination name)?

To a very low degree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *To a very high degree*

How interested are you in vacationing in (destination name)?

Not at all interested 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Very interested*

What is the likelihood of you visiting (destination name) for a vacation?

Very unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Very likely*

Please answer the following questions.

Which is most developed as a tourist destination?

[ ] Isla Holbox

[ ] Cancun

Which is least developed as a tourist destination?

[ ] Isla Holbox

[ ] Cancun

PART 3

For each of the following characteristics of a vacation, please indicate how well Cancun would satisfy the characteristic, then how well Isla Holbox would fulfill the characteristic:	**A.- Describes a vacation in Cancun?**	**B.- Describes a vacation in Isla Holbox?**
(EPISTEMIC NEEDS)	1 (Not at all) to 7 (Very much)	1 (Not at all) to 7 (Very much)
1.- Get an intellectually enriching experience	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
2.- Achieve a sense of discovery	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
3.- Explore new things	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
4.-Relieve boredom	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
5.- Feel rejuvenated	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
6.- Get involved with unique activities	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
7.- Experience a lot of thrills	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
8.- Travel to an adventurous place	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
9.-Experience customs different from those in my own environment	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
10.- Visit a popular tourist destination (r)	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
(EMOTIONAL NEEDS)	1 (Not at all) to 7 (Very much)	1 (Not at all) to 7 (Very much)
1.- See the beautiful scenery (landscapes, beaches, ocean)	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
2.- Enjoy artistic expressions (architecture, music, other art work)	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
3.- Enjoy fresh and natural odors of the area	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
4.- Be at a peaceful and relaxing environment	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
5.- See interesting plants and/or animals	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
6.- Feel a sense of pleasure	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
7.- Feel a sense of delight	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
8.- Feel a sense of excitement	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
9.- Feel a sense of amazement	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
10.- Feel a sense of inspiration	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
(FUNCTIONAL NEEDS)	1 (Not at all) to 7 (Very much)	1 (Not at all) to 7 (Very much)
1.- Enjoy good amenities for tourists	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
2.- Receive high-quality hospitality services	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
3.- Visit a vacation spot with a long history of good reputation	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
4.- Find good quality in accommodation facilities	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7

5.- Find accessible transportation to move easily at the destination	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
6.- Find good quality and variety of food	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
7.- Find good shopping options	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
8.-Find great entertainment and amusement options	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
9.-Enjoy high standards of hygiene and cleanliness	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
(SOCIAL NEEDS)	1 (Not at all) to 7 (Very much)	1 (Not at all) to 7 (Very much)
1.- Meet people with similar interests	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
2.- Be at the same place with other tourists you admire and look up to	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
3.- Project the image of the kind of people you aspire to be	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
4.- Visit a place where other people similar to you spend their vacation	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
5.- Visit a place consistent with how you see yourself	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
6.- Be perceived by others as similar to the image of tourists at the destination	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
7.- Reflect the kind of person you are	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7

PART 4

To you pleasure travel is:

1 (Very much) 2 (Somewhat) 3 (Neither) 4 (Somewhat) 5 (Very much)

of little importance	1	2	3	4	5	of great importance
of little interest	1	2	3	4	5	of great interest
means nothing to me	1	2	3	4	5	means a lot to me
of little relevance	1	2	3	4	5	of great relevance
not entertaining	1	2	3	4	5	entertaining
dull	1	2	3	4	5	lively
unexciting	1	2	3	4	5	exciting

Please tell us how you think is traveling to (destination's name)?

Very safe *1* *2* *3* *4* *5* *6* *7* *Very risky*

Please tell us how you think is traveling to Mexico?

Very safe *1* *2* *3* *4* *5* *6* *7* *Very risky*

Please indicate your level of your agreement with each of the following statements:

1 = "strongly disagree" 7 = "strongly agree"

Compared to an average person, I am very familiar with a wide variety of holiday destinations.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Among my circle of friends, I'm one of the "experts" in holiday destinations.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When it comes to holiday destinations, I really don't know a lot.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Of the following four descriptions, please check the one which best describes your travel characteristics.

____ I enjoy packaged tours with pre-planned itineraries. I enjoy traveling with a knowledgeable guide along with a group of friends, family or other Americans. Comfort is very important.

____ I travel independently of a tour but I appreciate the services of a travel agent who can plan parts of my trip. I enjoy traveling with friends or family, and together we visit the famous sights. Comfort is important.

____ I enjoy arranging the trip myself and traveling alone or with a few close friends. Meeting local people is important and I prefer to get off the beaten path, however, comfort and reliable transportation are important.

____ I enjoy engaging completely in a host country's culture. I enjoy the freedom of having no travel itinerary, timetable, or well-defined travel goals. I shun the beaten path. I will forgo comfort for economy and even work along the way to fund my travels.

PART 5

Finally, please provide the following demographic information about yourself (for purpose of organizing the data).

Gender: [ ] Male [ ] Female

Age:
[ ] 21 – 30
[ ] 31 - 40
[ ] 41- 50
[ ] 51 - 60
[ ] 61 -70
[ ] More than 70

Education:
[ ] Grammar School
[ ] High School or Equivalent
[ ] Vocational/Technical School (2 yrs)
[ ] Some College
[ ] College Graduate (4 yrs)
[ ] Master's Degree (MS)
[ ] Doctoral Degree (PhD)
[ ] Professional Degree (MD, JD, etc.)

Household Income: (approximate per year)
[ ] Under $15,000
[ ] $15,000-24,999
[ ] $25,000-34,999
[ ] $35,000-49,999
[ ] $50,000-74,999
[ ] $75,000-99,999
[ ] $100,000-149,999
[ ] $150,000 and over.

Marital Status:
[ ] Married
[ ] Single
[ ] Divorced
[ ] Living with another
[ ] Separated
[ ] Widowed

Including yourself, how many persons are in your household?:
[ ] One
[ ] Two
[ ] Three
[ ] Four
[ ] Five or more

What is your occupation?:_____

In what state do you currently reside? _____

Permanent Address Zip Code:_____

How often do you normally go on vacation trips?

[ ] Less than once per year
[ ] Once per year
[ ] Twice per year
[ ] Three times per year
[ ] More than three times per year

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Oliver Cruz-Milán earned a Ph.D. in Business Administration with a concentration in Marketing from the Robert C. Vackar College of Business and Entrepreneurship at The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley. He previously earned a B.S. in Hotel and Restaurant Management from the Conrad N. Hilton College at the University of Houston, and a Master's in Tourism Marketing from Universidad La Salle - Cancún. His research has appeared in journals including *Journal of Travel Research*, *Tourism Management*, and other publications.

Before pursuing his doctoral degree, Oliver gained professional experience in various service and marketing-related capacities in the field of hospitality and tourism in the United States and Mexico. He also has experience as an educator at the higher education level in both countries, developing program curricula and teaching undergraduate and graduate courses, including face-to-face as well as technology-mediated formats. Currently, Oliver serves as Assistant Professor of Marketing in the College of Business and Social Sciences at West Virginia State University (e-mail: ocruzmilan@wvstateu.edu).