



# THE NOVEL CONCEPT OF DESTINATION LOVE IN TOURISM & MARKETING

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## Βεβαίωση Εκπόνησης Διδακτορικής Διατριβής



ΠΑΝΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΙΟ ΠΕΙΡΑΙΩΣ  
ΣΧΟΛΗ ΟΙΚΟΝΟΜΙΚΩΝ ΕΠΙΧΕΙΡΗΜΑΤΙΚΩΝ ΚΑΙ ΔΙΕΘΝΩΝ ΣΠΟΥΔΩΝ  
ΤΜΗΜΑ ΟΡΓΑΝΩΣΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΔΙΟΙΚΗΣΗΣ ΕΠΙΧΕΙΡΗΣΕΩΝ

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### ΒΕΒΑΙΩΣΗ ΕΚΠΟΝΗΣΗΣ ΔΙΔΑΚΤΟΡΙΚΗΣ ΔΙΑΤΡΙΒΗΣ

Δηλώνω υπεύθυνα ότι η διδακτορική διατριβή για τη λήψη του διδακτορικού τίτλου, του Τμήματος Οργάνωσης και Διοίκησης Επιχειρήσεων του Πανεπιστημίου Πειραιώς, με τίτλο **Αναπτύσσοντας τη Δομική, Σύνθετη Έννοια της Αγάπης για ένα Προορισμό στον Τουρισμό και το Μάρκετινγκ** έχει συγγραφεί από εμένα αποκλειστικά και στο σύνολό της. Δεν έχει υποβληθεί ούτε έχει εγκριθεί στο πλαίσιο κάποιου άλλου διδακτορικού, μεταπτυχιακού προγράμματος ή προπτυχιακού τίτλου σπουδών, στην Ελλάδα ή στο εξωτερικό, ούτε είναι εργασία ή τμήμα εργασίας ακαδημαϊκού ή επαγγελματικού χαρακτήρα.

Δηλώνω επίσης υπεύθυνα ότι οι πηγές στις οποίες ανέτρεξα για την εκπόνηση της συγκεκριμένης εργασίας, αναφέρονται στο σύνολό τους, κάνοντας πλήρη αναφορά στους συγγραφείς, τον εκδοτικό οίκο ή το περιοδικό, συμπεριλαμβανομένων και των πηγών που ενδεχομένως χρησιμοποιήθηκαν από το διαδίκτυο. Παράβαση της ανωτέρω ακαδημαϊκής μου ευθύνης αποτελεί ουσιώδη λόγο για την ανάκληση του διπλώματός μου.

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## **Dedication**

This Ph.D dissertation is dedicated to my parents, Konstantinos and Katerina, who love and support me unconditionally anytime, anywhere.



## **Τίτλος διδακτορικής διατριβής: Αναπτύσσοντας τη Δομική, Σύνθετη Έννοια της Αγάπης για ένα Προορισμό στον Τουρισμό και το Μάρκετινγκ**

### **Σύνοψη**

Ο ουσιαστικός ρόλος της αγάπης, στον τουρισμό και το μάρκετινγκ, έχει τονιστεί από πολλούς ακαδημαϊκούς. Στον τουρισμό, το brand προορισμού -δηλαδή η δημιουργία ενός ονόματος, συμβόλου, λογότυπου, λεκτικού σήματος ή άλλου γραφικού που προσδιορίζει έναν προορισμό- (Blain et al., 2005) έχει εξελιχθεί ως μέσο υποστήριξης της δημιουργίας μιας ξεχωριστής εικόνας προορισμού που θα επηρέαζε τελικά τις επιλογές προορισμού των καταναλωτών. Έτσι, μαζί με τις διάφορες έννοιες του branding που μεταφέρθηκαν από το Μάρκετινγκ στον Τουρισμό, η αγάπη για το brand προορισμού βρήκε μια ιδιαίτερη θέση στη σχετική βιβλιογραφία.

Πρόσφατα, ωστόσο, οι ερευνητές/ακαδημαϊκοί εστιάζουν στην εμπειρία της αγάπης όσον αφορά στις σχέσεις ανθρώπου-προϊόντος, πέρα από τις μάρκες και τις εικόνες, και επομένως είναι πολύ σημαντικό να επανεξετάσουμε την εμπειρία προορισμού-επισκέπτη και συγκεκριμένα την έννοια της αγάπης για τον προορισμό. Αυτή η διδακτορική διατριβή στοχεύει να διερευνήσει διεξοδικά την έννοια της αγάπης για έναν προορισμό και να αναπτύξει τη θεωρία καθώς και την πρώτη κλίμακα μέτρησης για την αγάπη προς τον προορισμό, ως μια καθολική έννοια που υπερβαίνει συγκεκριμένες μάρκες και εικόνες προορισμού. Η αγάπη προορισμού αποτελεί μια έννοια που σχετίζεται περισσότερο με την αγάπη για τις εμπειρίες που ζούμε σε έναν προορισμό, τις αλληλεπιδράσεις με το τοπίο, την κουλτούρα, τους ανθρώπους και τα δημιουργήματά του, παρά με τα συναισθήματα που σχηματίζουν οι τουρίστες προς τα στοιχεία της επωνυμίας του προορισμού.

Για να καλύψει αυτό το ερευνητικό κενό, αυτή η διατριβή αναφέρει μια σειρά από τρεις ερευνητικές προσπάθειες και αναπτύσσει μια κλίμακα για να καταγράψει την καθολικότητα της αγάπης για τον προορισμό. Η αγάπη για τον προορισμό είναι μια έννοια εξαιρετικά περιεκτική, τριών επιπέδων. Διαθέτει μια επταδιάστατη δομή που αποτελείται από την αγάπη για τον εαυτό μας, συναισθηματική αλληλεγγύη με τους ντόπιους, θετική συναισθηματική σύνδεση με τον προορισμό, ανθρωπομορφισμό του



προορισμού, ενσωμάτωση του προορισμού στον εαυτό μας, μακροχρόνια σχέση με τον προορισμό και παθιασμένη/ρομαντική συμπεριφορά για τον προορισμό. Η κλίμακα έχει αξιοπιστία εσωτερικής συνέπειας, εννοιολογική εγκυρότητα και νομολογική εγκυρότητα. Αυτή η διατριβή παρέχει πολύτιμες ακαδημαϊκές προεκτάσεις, καθώς συμβάλλει στη θεωρία και καθιερώνει μια κλίμακα αγάπης για τον προορισμό και συνεπώς για την κατανόηση των δεσμών των τουριστών προς τους προορισμούς. Παρέχει επίσης εφαρμόσιμες στρατηγικές για τους επαγγελματίες του τουρισμού.



## Abstract

The essential role of love, in tourism and marketing, has been highlighted by many scholars. In tourism, destination branding -i.e., the creation of a name, symbol, logo, word mark or other graphic that identifies a destination- (Blain et al., 2005) has evolved as a means to support the creation of a distinct destination image that would eventually influence consumers' destination choices. Along the various branding concepts transferred thus from Marketing to Tourism, destination brand love found a special place in the relevant literature.

Recently though, researchers are focusing on the experience of love in person-product relationships, beyond brands and images, and it is thus vital to revisit the destination-visitor experience and re-examine the concept of destination love. This doctoral dissertation aims to thoroughly investigate the concept of love for a destination and to develop the theory as well as the first measurement scale for destination love, as a universal concept that transcends specific destination brands and images. Destination love encompasses a concept that relates more to the love for the experiences lived in a destination, the interactions with its scenery, its culture, its people and its artifacts, rather than the sentiments that tourists form towards the brand elements of the destination.

To fill this research gap, this dissertation reports a series of three research efforts and develops a scale to capture the universality of destination love. Destination love is a third-order, highly inclusive construct. It features a seven-dimensional structure comprising of self-love, emotional solidarity with locals, positive emotional connection with destination, anthropomorphism, self-destination integration, long-term relationship with destination, and passionate/romantic-driven behavior towards destination. The scale shows internal consistency reliability, construct validity and nomological validity. This dissertation has valuable academic implications, since it contributes to theory and establishes destination love scale for understanding tourists' bonds towards destinations. It also has workable implications for tourism practitioners.



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## SUMMARY

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In our everyday life, we often use the word “love” not only for our interpersonal relationships and thus people, but also for inanimate things, such as objects, brands, products, services, activities, nature, art, books, traveling, hobbies, entertainment, experiences, places, country, money as well as pets and abstract entities, such as ideas (e.g., Fehr & Russell, 1991; Ahuvia, Batra & Bagozzi, 2008; Heinrich, Albrecht & Bauer, 2012). The essential role of love in marketing has been acknowledged and highlighted by many academics (e.g., Ahuvia, 1993, 2005; Whang, Allen, Sahoury & Zhang, 2004; Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006; Kamat & Parulekar, 2007; Keh, Pang & Peng, 2007; Albert, Merunka & Valette-Florence, 2008; Bagozzi, Batra & Ahuvia, 2008; Sarkar, 2011, 2013; Sarkar, Ponnampalani & Murthy, 2012; Loureiro & Kaufmann, 2012; Batra, Bagozzi & Ahuvia, 2012; Roy, Eshghi & Sarkar, 2013; Albert & Merunka, 2013; Ahuvia, Batra & Bagozzi, 2014; Fetscherin, 2014; Rauschnabel & Ahuvia, 2014; Fetscherin, Barker & Peacock, 2015; Langner, Schmidt & Fischer, 2015; Langner, Bruns, Fischer & Rossiter, 2016; Kaufmann, Loureiro & Manarioti, 2016; Bagozzi, Batra & Ahuvia, 2017; Hegner, Fenko & Teravest, 2017; Bairrada, Coelho & Coelho, 2018; Schmid & Huber, 2019; Palusuk, Koles & Hasan, 2019; Sarkar, Sarkar & Bhatt, 2019; Sajtos, Cao, Espinosa, Phau, Rossi, Sung & Voyer, 2020; Bigne, Andreu, Perez & Ruiz, 2020; Gumparthi & Patra, 2020; Anwar & Jalees, 2020), mainly because of its unquestionable positive outcomes, such as loyalty (e.g., Ahuvia, 2005; Bergkvist & Bech-Larsen, 2010; Batra et al., 2012; Bairrada et al., 2018; Coelho et al., 2019), word of mouth (e.g., Ahuvia, 2005; Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006; Albert & Merunka, 2013; Fetscherin, 2014; Wallace et al., 2014; Karjaluoto et al., 2016; Coelho et al., 2019; Bairrada et al., 2019), willingness to pay more (e.g., Albert & Merunka, 2013; Swimberghe et al., 2014; Bairrada et al., 2019), self-disclosure (Bairrada et al., 2019), active engagement (e.g., Bergkvist & Bech-Larsen, 2010; Bairrada et al., 2019), resistance to negative information (e.g., Bairrada et al., 2019), and forgiveness (e.g., Hegner et al., 2017). Thus it is more prevalent, for marketers, nowadays, to use love as a marketing tool (Bauer, Heinrich & Albrecht, 2009) in order to better understand the consumer–brand relationships (Amaro, Barroco & Antunes, 2020) and gain competitive advantage in the market.



Even though there are numerous academic studies dealing with brand love, there is a dearth of academic researches investigating the concept of love in the field of tourism. In particular, up to now, all existing studies of love in tourism context are based on specific destinations, i.e., “destination *brand* love” (Swanson, 2015, 2017; Lee & Hyun, 2016; Aro, Suomi & Saraniemi, 2018; Christou, 2018; Jiang, 2019; Andriotis, Foroudi & Marvi, 2020), and/or already entrenched conceptualizations in love (e.g., Lee & Hyun, 2016; Swanson, 2017; Jiang, 2019; Andriotis et al., 2020; Amaro, Barroco & Antunes, 2020), denoting a narrow perspective in love tourism research with respect to the complexity, universality, and tourism-specific nature of love concept (Lykoudi, Zouni & Tsogas, 2020a). Specifically, destination *brand* love is described as *philia*, *storge* and *eros* (Swanson, 2017), *agape* (Christou, 2018), or *self-brand integration*, *emotional attachment* and *passionate love* (Lee & Hyun, 2016; Andriotis et al., 2020), typical notions that have been used/transferred from interpersonal and/ or brand love theories. This fragmented view has resulted in a substantial lack of tourism destination love types (Lykoudi, Zouni & Tsogas, 2020a). Various academics have argued that the principles of product brands do not apply and cannot be transferred directly to services or tourist destinations (e.g., Aaker, 1991, Girard, 1999; Knowles, 2001; Keller, 2003, Konecnik & Gartner, 2007), since places/destinations have a completely distinct nature from businesses/corporations and entail some unique features that are quite different from consumer goods or services (Girard, 1999; Freire, 2009). This dissertation is the first in tourism to perceive “*destination love*” as a universal and thus a broader concept than “*destination brand love*” (Lykoudi, Zouni & Tsogas, 2020a). Hence, this study adopts and provides a broader love research stance, which incorporates the complex, universal, and tourism-specific nature of destination love. The lack of academic investigations on love for tourism destinations, as a universal concept, stresses the urge for a broader and more rigorous conceptualization of the love notion in tourism context, as well as the need for further research, encompassing the truly international nature of tourism via the use of multicultural and more diverse samples (Lykoudi et al., 2020a). In the same vein, brand love research efforts have already directed towards potential dissimilarities between different cultures concerning the terms used in relation to the concept (Albert et al., 2008), and Barker, Peacock and Fetscherin (2015:1) stress that “*marketers need to think about ‘love’ not within a specific*



*product category but across the entire universe of brands*". It is imperative, therefore, that, love for a particular destination alone should not be perceived as the end game, since the concept of *'destination love'* emerges stronger and richer, by adopting a universal perspective, surpassing all manner of particular destination brands and entrenched conceptualizations in other fields or contexts (Lykoudi et al., 2020a). Furthermore, concerning the study of love in the field of marketing, many academic investigations on brand love have been largely or partially quantitative in nature (e.g., Carroll & Ahuvia 2006; Bauer, Heinrich & Martin, 2007; Albert, Dwight, & Valette-Florence, 2008; Bergkvist & Bech-Larsen, 2010; Sarkar, Ponnampalani & Murthy, 2012), and they have predominately focused on consumer products/brands with some exceptions that include service industries (e.g., Tsai, 2011; Long-Tolbert & Gammoh, 2012). In the field of leisure, hospitality and tourism, there are scarce qualitative studies on destination *brand* love (destination-specific) and there is need in the literature for quantitative studies to establish love measurement items, reliability, and validity. According to Swanson, Medway and Warnaby (2015:2), qualitative research methods *"may be the most effective way to research this area in a tourism context and may serve as a catalyst to deeper insights than would be possible with quantitative methods alone"*. Moreover, Aro, Suomi and Saraniemi (2018: 80) state that *"once destination brand love has been sufficiently explored qualitatively, further studies could develop quantitative measures"*. The limited qualitative and exploratory studies on the love concept in tourism, call for the extension of the current findings and the quantification of the research investigations in order to fully establish its measures, reliability and validity.

No research has yet developed a theory and a measurement scale for destination love. To fill these gaps in the existing literature of love towards destinations as well as respond to the academic call for further research on (brand) love in other contexts (e.g., White et al., 2020; Amaro et al., 2020), this dissertation reports a series of three studies, offers a theoretical framework and develops a scale to capture the universal approach of destination love. Destination love found to be a third-order, highly inclusive construct, mainly due to its variety of sub-dimensions and measurement items. It features a seven-dimensional structure comprising of self-love, emotional solidarity, anthropomorphism, self-destination integration, long-term relationship, passionate/romantic-driven behavior and positive emotional connection. The scale



exhibits internal consistency reliability, construct validity, and nomological validity. A short description as well as a depiction of the seven final emerged destination love dimensions of this dissertation are provided below. Table 1 shows a short description of each emerged destination love dimension.

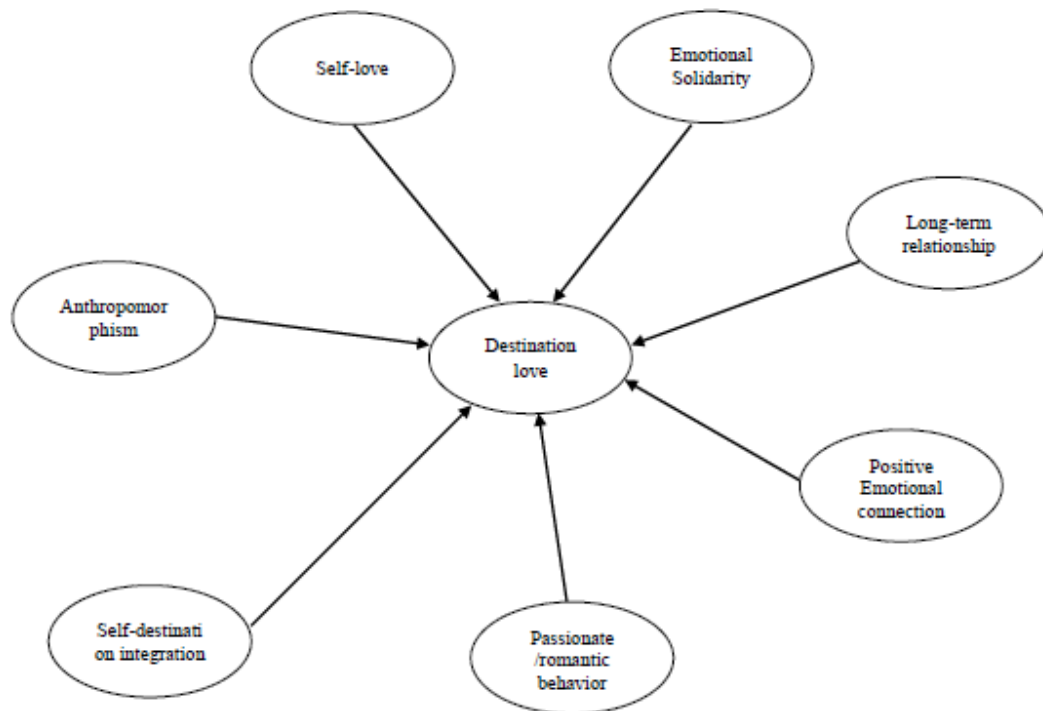
Table 1: dimensions & definitions of destination love

<b>Dimensions</b>	<b>Definitions</b>
<i>Self-love</i>	The achievement of the (fullest) transformation or/and confirmation of ourselves, the richest achievement of well-being, and the deepest experience of self-actualization, balance, expansion and fulfillment
<i>Emotional solidarity with locals</i>	Intimate relationship/emotional closeness between tourists and locals
<i>Anthropomorphism</i>	Tourists' tendency to imbue loved destinations within the human category, by giving them locals' characteristics, traits or behaviors and see them as relationship partners.
<i>Self-destination integration</i>	The match between tourist's self-identity and destination identity/characteristics; tourists' experience of intrinsic benefits and life meaning rewards; tourists' nostalgia/frequent thoughts of loved destination
<i>Positive emotional connection</i>	Positive emotional feelings towards loved destination, such as positive psychological states, emotional attachment, natural/intuitive fit with it
<i>Long-term commitment/loyalty</i>	A sense of long-term commitment with loved destination
<i>Passionate/romantic driven behavior</i>	Passionate feelings for loved destination, sense of longing to visit it, romantic feelings stemming from destination



Figure 1 depicts the seven emerged dimensions of destination love

Figure 1



Hence the current study provides for the first time a universal conceptualization of destination love and operationalizes its domain by; empirically testing its dimensions and measurement items; and offering a coherent, evidence based and empirically tested framework for successful destination marketing strategies. Furthermore, this research effort enriches the existent literature and makes several theoretical and managerial contributions. It offers academia with a new perspective of love in the tourism field, as well as a reliable and valid scale to measure this novel notion. The findings offer opportunities to academics to further validate and confirm the proposed scales as well as further investigate the importance of the love concept in the tourism field. Moreover, due to its universality, this study provides a new protocol to measuring tourists' love that captures as many as possible related dimensions of tourists' love relationship with destinations and the scale could be used for all types of destinations (e.g., heritage, recreational, spiritual, agricultural).

Briefly, the findings extend prior knowledge in tourism and marketing by providing academics with a comprehensive view of what constitutes love towards destinations





and how it is measured, and practitioners with how it could be used strategically in order to gain competitive advantage in the destination marketplace.



## CHAPTER ONE : INTRODUCTION

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Nowadays human decisions and actions are much more based on intuition and emotional responses, as consumers become better informed, more knowledgeable and sophisticated in their choices and they take functional features/benefits as a given (Schmitt, 1999). What consumers really seek is to acquire, in addition to what is being sold (product or service), emotional experiences that stimulate their senses, hearts, and minds (e.g., Schmitt, 1999). This is specifically true for services or intangibles (e.g. Morrison & Crane, 2007). In the literature, the striking majority of the studies about emotional branding is focused almost exclusively on product (tangibles) brands and not service (intangible) brands, even though the intimate nature of services makes emotions a crucial determinant in the selection and consumption behavior of consumers (Morrison & Crane, 2007).

Emotion research is essential for tourism studies, since it opens up new research avenues in the field (Buda, Hauteserre & Johnston, 2014). According to Hosany & Gilbert (2010), emotion research has been carried out to examine, among others, the determinants of postconsumption emotions (Muller, Tse & Venkatasubramaniam, 1991), the relationship between overall satisfaction and emotions (del Bosque & San Martin, 2008; De Rojas & Camarero, 2008), customer loyalty (e.g., Barsky & Nash, 2002), behavioral intentions (e.g., Bigné, Andreu & Gnoth, 2005; Jang & Namkung 2009), and emotions as a segmentation variable for tourism, travel and leisure services (Bigné & Andreu, 2004). Hosany & Gilbert (2010) also claim that several scholars such as Chuang (2007) and Kwortnik & Ross (2007) have investigated the effect of emotions on tourism and leisure purchase decisions. Empirical studies of the role of emotions in tourist destinations, however, are rather limited (e.g., Hosany & Gilbert, 2010), not because of a lack of interest in the topic but most likely, partially, by the difficulty and complexity of providing a definition of emotions (Staus & Falk, 2013).

Human beings are emotional creatures and emotions prevail our daily lives, drive our behavior and have an impact on various individuals' perceptions and judgments (e.g., Schmitt, 1999; Estes, Golonka & Jones, 2011). In the literature, there is an interest for understanding the personal bonds, ties or attachments individuals build with particular landscapes or places (e.g., Williams & Vaske, 2003; Kyle, Graefe, Manning & Bacon, 2004). This academic interest has raised the attention toward the study of human-



place bonds (Kyle, Graefe, Manning & Bacon, 2004). Academic investigations of this phenomenon have been conducted in various academic fields (Kyle, Graefe, Manning & Bacon, 2004), including natural resource management, tourism, environmental psychology and education (e.g., Kyle, Graefe, & Manning, 2005; Halpenny, 2010; Raymond, Brown, & Robinson, 2011; Ramkissoon, Weiler & Smith, 2012; Ramkissoon, Smith & Weiler, 2013; Ramkissoon, Weiler & Smith, 2013). Most of the human-place bonds studies have fallen under the study of “*place attachment*” (e.g., Vaske & Kobrin, 2001; Kyle, Absher, & Graefe, 2003; Hernández, Hidalgo, Salazar-Laplace & Hess, 2007; Raymond, Brown & Weber, 2010; Yuksel, Yuksel & Bilim, 2010; Halpenny, 2010; Scannell & Gifford, 2017; Buonincontri, Marasco & Ramkissoon, 2017; Dwyer, Chen & Lee, 2019; Isa, Ariyanto & Kiumarsi, 2019; Patwardhan, Ribeiro, Payini, Woosnam, Mallya & Gopalakrishnan, 2020). Some other related concepts that denote people’s strong bond and affinity with places, such as “*sense of place*” (Hay, 1998), “*rootedness*” (Tuan, 1980), “*insideness*” (Relph, 1976), “*place bonding*” (e.g., Hammitt, Kyle & Oh, 2009; Cheng & Kuo, 2015) and “*topophilia*” (Tuan, 1974) have been studied as well. Even though having acknowledged that attachment and love are related but conceptually different concepts (e.g., Aronson, Wilson & Akert, 2006; Chang & Chieng, 2006; Heinrich, Albrecht & Bauer, 2012; Loureiro, Ruediger & Demetris, 2012; Aro et al., 2018), as well as having recognized and stressed the importance of the concept of brand love in marketing, academics in the field of tourism have only very recently started investigating the concept of “*destination brand love*” as a way of attracting tourists (Swanson 2015, 2017; Aro et al., 2018; Jiang, 2019; Andriotis et al., 2020). The field of tourism, hospitality and leisure is certainly appropriate for academic studies on love (e.g., Hosany & Gilbert, 2010; Hosany et al., 2015; Swanson, 2015, 2017; Christou, 2018; Aro et al., 2018; Andriotis et al., 2020; Lykoudi et al., 2020a; Amaro, Barroco & Antunes, 2020), due to the high competition in the tourism sector for tourists’ attractions, funding, as well as support from various stakeholder groups (Aro et al., 2018). Additionally, love can function as an essential marketing “tool” to build powerful, differentiated destination brands in order to attract and retain tourists (Swanson, 2017; Aro et al., 2018; Amaro et al., 2020) in an increasingly competitive environment where destination products/ services/experiences/attributes are highly homogeneous (Zhang, Xu & Gursoy, 2020).



However, criticism, for acknowledging love existence in non-human contexts, stems from the speculation that love is perceived sacred and for this reason using “*love*” for objects instead of individuals is viewed as a defamation of the nature of love (Ahuvia, 1993; Ahuvia, Batra, & Bagozzi, 2014). Despite the criticism, love constitutes a psychological process that can exist toward human beings, ideas, brands, activities, objects and destinations (e.g., Ahuvia, 1993; Whang et al., 2004; Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006; Albert et al., 2008; Batra et al., 2012; Ahuvia et al., 2014; Swanson, 2017; Aro et al., 2018; Christou, 2018; Andriotis et al., 2020; Lykoudi, Zouni & Tsogas, 2020a; Amaro et al., 2020; Zhang, Xu & Gursoy, 2020). Interestingly, objects associated with nature, places and the landscape/ scenery are loved more frequently among the possible non-human objects (Ahuvia, 1993). The findings of Ahuvia (1993) set the basis and provide a particular rationale for investigating the notion of destination love as a distinct phenomenon.

Although numerous marketing studies have defined, operationalized and methodologically validated the concept of brand love (e.g., Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006; Albert et al., 2008; Batra, Bagozzi & Ahuvia, 2012; Albert & Merunka, 2013), to date, the love concept has been very limited studied in tourism destination research. Academic studies have suggested that individuals can have real love feelings for places (Ahuvia, 1992) or destinations (Hosany & Gilbert, 2010), such as outdoor resorts (Aro et al., 2018) and cities (Swanson, 2017; Strandberg & Styvén, 2019). Even though individuals usually travel and visit many different places, only few of their holiday destinations are loved (Ahuvia, 2005; Aro et al., 2018). As a consequence, a destination (brand) has to enclose and offer something unique and special for the visitor/ tourist in order to stimulate/trigger him or her to fall in love with it (Aro et al., 2018). According to Cheng and Kuo (2015) individuals may form an emotional tie to destinations that they have visited only one time or even destinations that are unknown. In line with this argument, Swanson (2015) suggests that there are some individuals who are in love with what some destination brands represent, although never having actually visited them. This can happen since travellers are overly imagination-driven (Reijnders, 2011), and they can form emotional bonding towards a place via imagination and fantasy (Griffiths, 2005).

Despite the great importance of love within tourism destinations (e.g., Hosany, Prayag, Deesilatham, Caušević, & Odeh, 2015; Swanson, 2017; Aro et al., 2018;



Christou, 2018; Jiang, 2019; Andriotis et al., 2020; Lykoudi, Zouni & Tsogas, 2020a; Amaro et al., 2020), it has only recently started to be investigated in today's tourism literature as "*destination brand love*" and thus as destination-specific emotion/relationship (e.g., Swanson, 2017; Aro, Suomi, & Saraniemi, 2018; Christou, 2018; Jiang, 2019; Andriotis et al., 2020). Destination *brand love* is described as *philia*, *storge* and *eros* (Swanson, 2017), *agape* (Christou, 2018), *passionate love*, *emotional attachment*, and *self-brand integration* (Lee & Hyun, 2016; Andriotis et al., 2020) or *passionate behavior*, *long-term relationship*, *positive emotional connection*, *self-brand integration*, *attitude strength* and *attitude valence* (Jiang, 2019 who transferred directly the dimensions of Batra et al., 2012), all typical interpersonal and/or brand love notions. These studies on love towards destinations, up to now:

1. use already entrenched (brand/interpersonal) love conceptualizations or scales (e.g., Lee & Hyun, 2016; Aro et al., 2018; Jiang, 2019; Andriotis et al., 2020; Amaro, Barroco & Antunes, 2020; Zhang, Xu & Gursoy, 2020), denoting a narrow perspective in the investigation of love in tourism research (Lykoudi et al., 2020a). In the literature, there are academics who support that a tourism destination can be considered as a product or a brand and thus the brand concept can be transferred to that of tourism destination in a much the same way (e.g., Buhalis, 2000; Morgan & Pritchard, 2000; Cai, 2002; Kotler & Gertner, 2002; Beerli & Martin, 2004; Yoon & Uysal, 2005; Hankinson, 2015). However, there are also academics, who have argued that the principles of product brands do not apply and cannot be transferred directly to services or tourist destinations (e.g., Aaker, 1991; Girard, 1999; Knowles, 2001; Keller, 2003, Konecnik & Gartner, 2007), since destinations are more complex and multifaceted than brands of consumer goods as well as destinations have a completely distinct nature from businesses and encompass some unique features that are quite different from consumer goods or services (e.g., Girard, 1999; Freire, 2009; Kaplan, Yurt, Guneri & Kurtulus, 2010; Vuignier, 2017). According to this stream of academics, destinations lack of a strategic center and clear organisational boundaries and entail the experiential factor. These unique features, among others, stress and highlight the differentiation of destination brands from product brands. Furthermore, based on findings of this dissertation (Lykoudi, Zouni & Tsogas, 2020b), *destination love* encompasses



higher emotional intensity, complexity, vagueness and less objectivity than *brand love*. Only a slight majority believes that *brand love* and *destination love* tend to be similar. These findings raise questions as to whether already entrenched brand love scales or/and theory can be transferred (almost) unaltered from a brand to a destination context (as it is the case in destination *brand love* studies) and thus it should be considered with caution by researchers.

2. Or/and are destination-specific, as they are focused on USA (Swanson, 2015, 2017), Thailand and Jordan (Hosany et al., 2015), Japan (Lee & Hyun, 2016), Finland (Aro et al., 2018), Cyprus (Christou, 2018), Shanghai Disneyland (Jiang, 2019), Hong Kong (Zhang, Xu & Gursoy, 2020) or London (Andriotis et al., 2020). This stresses the urge for a broader conceptualization of the love notion in tourism context, given the current lack in existing knowledge on love, as well as the need for further research, which should be consisted of multicultural and diverse sample, located in different countries (Lykoudi, Zouni & Tsogas, 2020a). This study perceives destination love as a universal and thus a broader concept than destination brand love.

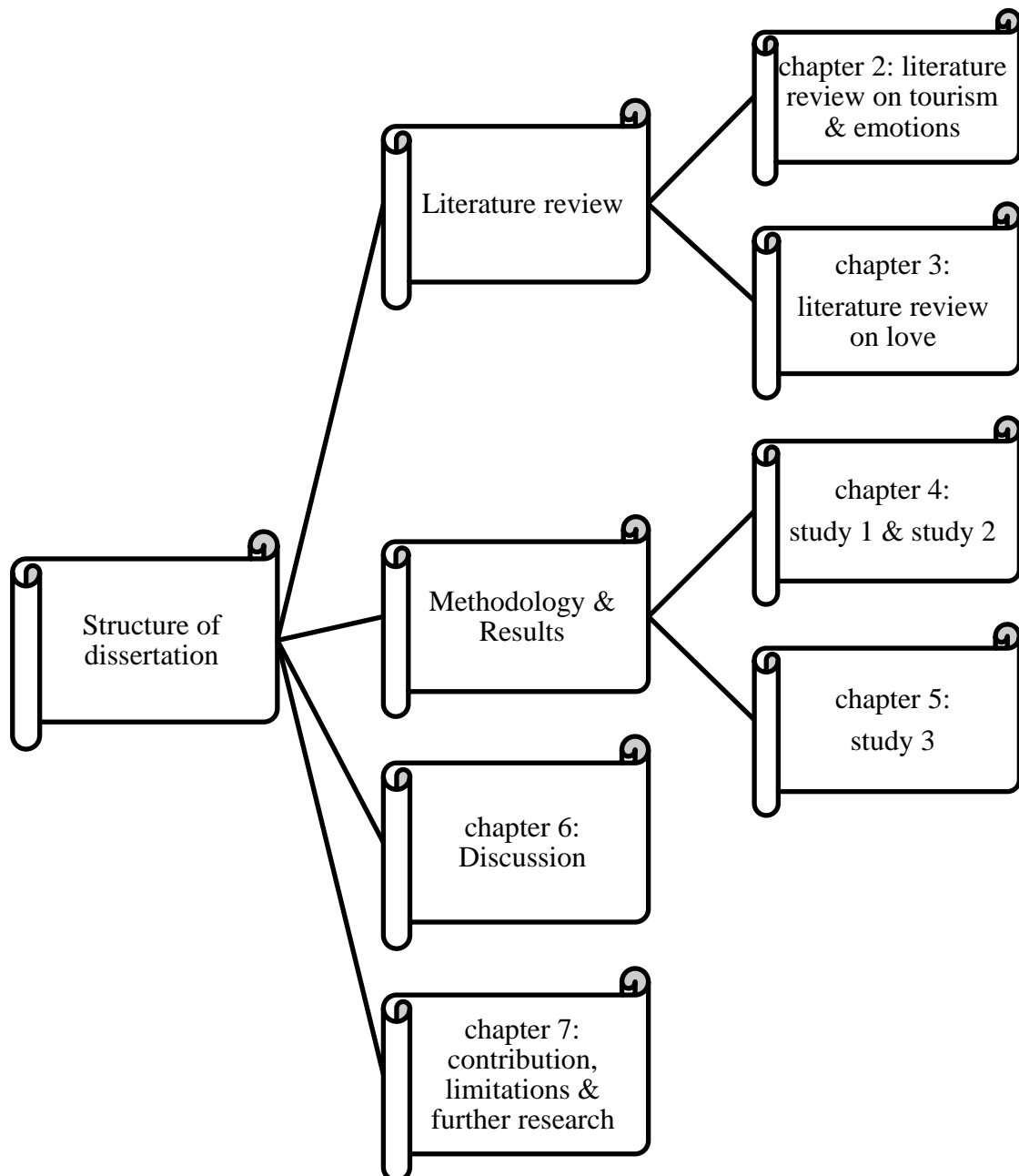
Swanson's (2015, 2017), Christou's (2018) as well as Aro's et al. (2018), Jiang's (2019) and Andrioti's et al. (2020) studies of destination *brand love* set the basis for an initial exploration and application of the love concept in tourism academic research efforts. However, the limited qualitative and exploratory studies on the love concept call for quantitative investigations in order to identify its measures, reliability and validity (Jiang, 2019). Thus, a main concern of this study is to fill this gap by developing a conceptual and research framework, encompassing both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Both types of research methods are considered substantial and are combined within an integrated framework. Only by establishing an integrated framework, will an improved comprehension of destination love be reached. Therefore, in order to provide a more accurate analysis and facilitate the interpretation of the results, both qualitative and quantitative data collection are implemented to enable this new research area of destination love to be profoundly explored as well as to allow the initial quantification of the research concepts.



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## STRUCTURE OF THE DISSERTATION

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## LITERATURE REVIEW

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### CHAPTERS 2 & 3

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Initially, an extensive and thorough literature review on tourism, tourism destinations, destination marketing, as well as emotions (Chapter 2) and love (Chapter 3) across different fields (psychology/sociology, marketing, tourism) was performed, from which the main research questions and objectives of this study were emerged and they can be summarized as follows:

1. Research question 1: *What is “destination love” and how is it operationalized?*

Study objective 1: This dissertation aims at theory building and measurement scale development of the novel notion of destination love, since all descriptions and investigations of love in tourism field, up to now, are based on specific destinations (destination brand love) or/ and already entrenched love conceptualizations and thus do not capture all of its possible dimensions and items. In other words, academic studies focused on the investigation and operationalization of destination love as a universal concept as well as theoretical and empirical investigations of destination love are totally missing in the literature. This constitutes a significant gap and this study aims to fill it. Participants of this study discussed destinations of their own choosing, which gives a universal approach in the research effort. This is in line with the procedure of previous studies in branding (e.g., Whang et al., 2004; Batra et al., 2012; Fetscherin et al., 2014; Rauschnabel & Ahuvia, 2014; Langner, Bruns, Fischer & Rossiter, 2016; Bagozzi, Batra & Ahuvia, 2016; Hegner et al., 2017), where participants had to answer the surveys with respect to their (most) favorite/ideal or loved brand.

2. Research Question 2: *Which are the similarities/differences of destination love, brand love and interpersonal love?*

Study objective 2: For many years interpersonal love has been considered as the basis of brand love in terms of the emotional nature. On the contrary, recently a rising body of researchers (e.g., Langner et al., 2015) examined and found that stronger emotions are observed in interpersonal love than in brand love and thus they are perceived as different emotions. An additional objective





of this dissertation is to compare the three notions of destination love, brand love and interpersonal love, in terms of similarity, emotional intensity, complexity, objectivity and vagueness criteria. This study constitutes the first attempt to compare these notions of love across these three different contexts by introducing, examining and comparing for the first time those notions in relation to destination love. It aims to contribute and shed some light on the debate concerning the procedure that

- tourism research explains love phenomena by using interpersonal love and brand love theories as well as
- consumer research usually explains brand love phenomena by using interpersonal love approaches (Batra et al., 2012; Langner et al., 2015)

3. Research Question 3: *Which tourists' segments develop each of the destination love types?*

Study objective 3: a third study objective is to identify the segments/ types of tourists that develop the emerged types/dimensions of destination love, with respect to their socio-demographic and behavioral variables. In this study, both a priori (demographics) and a posteriori (behavioural) variables are used for market segmentation.

4. Study objective 4: finally, an additional objective of this dissertation is to investigate and clarify the interrelationships among destination love and other focal marketing concepts such as satisfaction and word of mouth. In order to accomplish this purpose, a set of relationships are tested jointly. The investigation of these relationships serves nomological validity purposes as well.

As a novel concept in tourism marketing and consumer behavior, the theoretical and empirical development of destination love offers important insights to the tourism marketers as well as a rather unexplored field of research to the academics. It also contributes to a better understanding of the love concept in tourism, compared to other concepts extensively used and studied in the literature and (probably) associated with love (for instance passion, attachment, commitment, romance).



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## METHODOLOGY & RESULTS

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Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 describe the methodological procedure of the theory building and scale development of destination love as well as the results of the studies.

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### CHAPTER 4

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Concerning the theory development, this academic research followed initially a purposeful process in which individuals' coherent descriptions, articulations, explanations, and perceptions of the experienced destination love phenomenon is generated, manifested, and verified. The theory of destination love is grounded in the tourists' bond with destinations, who experience, live and create the love phenomenon towards destinations. The development of the empirically grounded theory via the initial use of qualitative methods (in-depth interviews and open-ended questions) is the result of a detailed understanding of tourists' in-depth articulation about the destination love phenomenon; the information collection on individuals' system of perceptions shaped by their emotional experiences at destinations and distinct aspects of the complex notion of destination love as well as the attempt to document the views of all key participants. Specifically, to build and test the destination love construct, this study did not use theories of interpersonal and brand love prior to the research findings in order not to omit important tourism-specific love items. The researcher employed initially a qualitative study (in-depth interviews) and a mixed study (open-ended written questions as well as closed questions), rather than merely transferring a priori, and directly, already entrenched theories as well as measurement scales of interpersonal love and brand love into tourism context. Primary data (items) emerged from the first two studies were then assessed, coded and analyzed in the light of the interpersonal love and brand love literatures; parallels were detected between the findings on destination love -brand love and destination love- interpersonal love, as relevant supporting evidence. Moreover, an initial identification of the tourists' segments that develop the emerged types/dimensions of destination love, with respect to their socio-demographic and behavioral variables, is provided. This methodological procedure offered theoretical insights on the love items and constructs that are used



subsequently in the third -quantitative- study, where the analysis of data and scale development are based (Chapter 5).

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## CHAPTER 5

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The development of destination love scale captures the multi- dimensional nature of love in order to be psychometrically valid and reliable. A detailed analysis of the theory and measurement scale development on the basis of emotion terms that reflect the tourists' love towards destinations is provided. Moreover, the clarification of the interrelationships among destination love and other focal marketing concepts, such as satisfaction and word of mouth is yielded.

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## DISCUSSION

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## CHAPTER 6

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Chapter 6 unrolls the main results of all studies, delves into the meaning, importance and relevance of these results with previous academic studies, and gives new insights into love towards tourism destinations. Moreover, this chapter sheds light on how each of destination love types vary among different socio-demographic and behavioral characteristics of individuals. It presents tourists' demographic and travel behavior characteristics with respect to destination love constructs and describes how individuals ascribe a love meaning to a destination as well as how these emotional meanings are manifested in their travel attitudes and behaviors.

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## CONTRIBUTION, LIMITATIONS & FURTHER RESEARCH

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## CHAPTER 7

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This chapter presents the valuable academic, managerial and personal/social implications of this dissertation, suggests future research directions and refers to the limitations of this research effort.



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## ACADEMIC AND MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

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This academic research of love is the first in tourism and marketing fields that builds a new theory and scale, which is not destination-specific, but rather universal.

It contributes to love theory and establishes destination love measurements scales for understanding and predicting tourists' actions taken in accordance with the feelings, emotions, values and meanings attributed to destinations.

Furthermore, in order to develop the theory and scale of destination love, this study does not use a priori already entrenched brand/interpersonal love conceptualizations or scales, denoting a broader and more rigorous perspective in the exploration of love towards destinations by taking into account the complexity and tourism-specific nature of destination love concept (Lykoudi et al., 2020a).

Moreover, this research effort encompasses the truly international nature of tourism via the use of multicultural and more diverse samples (Lykoudi et al., 2020). The findings of this study offer numerous academic and managerial implications that could enrich the knowledge of the human-place bonds and help manage these relationships.

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## ACADEMIC IMPLICATIONS

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- ❖ This dissertation is the first to establish and validate both theoretically and methodologically the dimensions and items of destination love in the fields of tourism and marketing.
  - This research effort builds emotion and relational theory in the field of tourism marketing.
  - Theoretically, this study addresses and fills a significant gap in the literature by defining and operationalizing the concept of “*destination love*” for the first time *universally*. It is the universality of destination love that provides, as many as possible, love types that individuals can develop/form towards destinations. Moreover, all the emerged



destination love constructs/types can function as stand-alone theoretical constructs in the tourism literature.

- Not only this study gives insights into the novel and under-searched notion of destination love, but also into its similarities/differences to already entrenched love notions such as brand love and interpersonal love. This research examines for the first time the commonalities and differences among different kinds of love (interpersonal versus destination versus brand love) with respect to objectivity, emotional intensity, vagueness and complexity criteria. Hence, it certainly sheds light on individuals' mental prototypes that present a major challenge in the social and behavioral literatures, since they are perceived tacit knowledge structures and hence they cannot be easily explained.
- This study, apart from theory, develops the measurement scale of destination love and methodologically validates this concept. It is the first study which builds and develops an extensive multiple-item and multi-dimensional measure of destination love, as well as a uniform gauge of evaluations and valid methodology for destination love. This research provides a consistent and robust model that refines our understanding of this complex emotion in marketing.
- ❖ This research effort offers a deeper and better understanding of love towards tourism destinations that opens up a new research area in affective attunements and certainly adds up to the discourse of an emotional birth of constructive values that is apparently rather absent in the tourism literature.
- ❖ This dissertation proposes, examines, and establishes a conceptual framework of destination love, as well as its interrelationships with established marketing concepts, such as satisfaction and WOM, in a tourism context.
- ❖ This research contributes to tourism marketing research by delineating destination love's contribution to both business (e.g., WOM, loyalty) as well as non-business benefits (e.g., self-transformation, life meaning rewards, well-being), which ultimately lead to business benefits as well.



## MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

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Destinations must be strategically managed as the increasing importance of loved brands in marketing practice necessitates the theoretical development as well as the empirical measurement of love in the tourism context. Just as love towards brands constitutes a focal aim of brand managers (e.g., Batra et al., 2012; Hegner et al., 2017), so does destination love for destination marketers. Hence it is vital for destination marketers to understand the value of love towards a destination and how the destination takes advantage and benefits from it (Amaro et al., 2020). This could be even more pertinent due to the fact that DMOs (destination marketing organizations) are usually restricted in their funds (Pike, 2016), and therefore should be effectively managed (Amaro et al., 2020).

- ❖ Practically, understanding the significance of destination love helps Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) clarify the sources and determine the role of love in the marketing of their destinations. This study provides a universal framework of destination love and it can give valuable insights into destination marketers about which of the emerged destination love types could be developed by their (potential) visitors at their destination.
- ❖ This study found which tourist segments develop each destination love dimension/type and built the socio-demographic and behavioral profile of tourists who develop each destination love dimension as well as destination love as a whole. This can help DMOs optimize their strategy planning and their product/services offers as well as the allocation of their marketing resources, when advertising and promoting their destinations.
- ❖ The destination love model provides a tool for destination experts in helping them with practical guidance that assists to identify, which love elements match with their destination and thus should be considered in developing a destination brand, and, more importantly, in understanding why and how these love elements have managerial significance. This destination love categorization can help marketers understand the different types of love that relate to the various benefits tourists expect from the relationships they develop with destinations. Furthermore, the findings of this dissertation could facilitate tourism professionals to carry out market research in order to identify



which type(s) of destination love characterizes their destination as well as the market segments that are more possible to develop these destination love types at their destination, which in turn will make them able to gain better strategic marketing insights. Moreover, the findings of this study can help destination marketers to reveal schemas, descriptions, narratives, and symbols that may be used to design and implement their destination marketing strategy.

- ❖ Additionally, this study offers insights into destination marketers and experts of how they can transform liked destinations into loved destinations as well as create tourists' love emotions/relationship towards their destination and keep that love relationship over time.
- ❖ Furthermore, this study suggests that brand managers could successfully entrench destination love features in order to reach each target market with a 'comprehensive range of emotional and experiential offerings', to propose an 'integrated emotional solution' and to create or/and keep a strong, long-lasting brand-consumers relationships



# LITERATURE REVIEW

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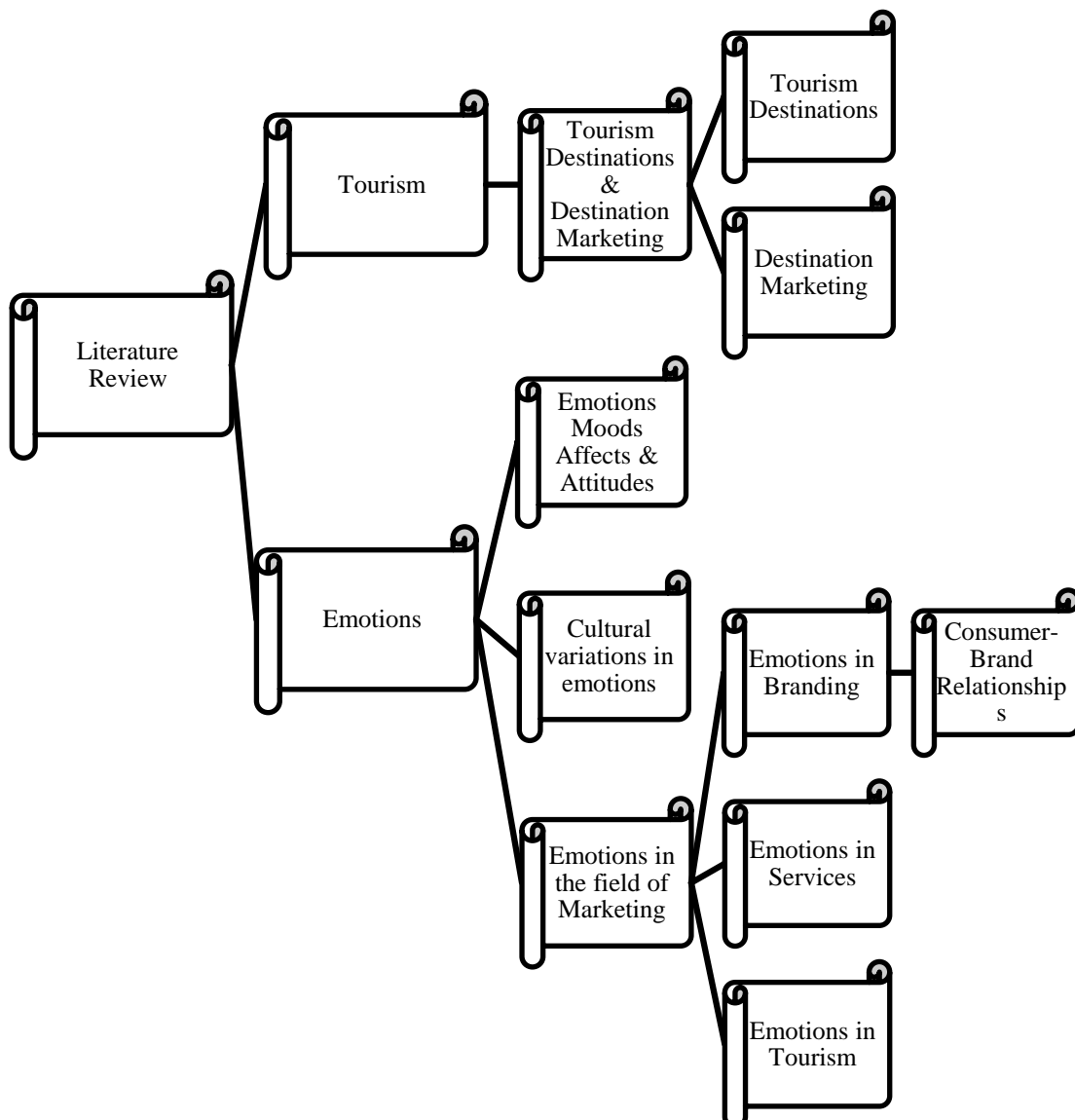
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# CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW ON TOURISM & EMOTIONS

## PREVIEW OF CHAPTER TWO



This chapter provides an overview of previous research on tourism and emotions across various disciplines. It also provides the sources upon which the main research goals were stemmed, and it explains the fuzzy word of emotion. The main objective



of the literature review was mainly to gain insights on previous academic studies on emotions across different academic fields (e.g., psychology, sociology, marketing and tourism) that subsequently formed part of the emergent research design process and set the basis for primary data collection procedures and requirements.

## 2.1. TOURISM

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Tourism is one of the largest industries globally and is viewed as a total market representing consumers' desires and demands for a quite wide range of products and services related to travel and hospitality sector (Middleton & Clarke, 2002; Hudson, 2008). Tourism is described as the sum of the relationships stemming from the individuals' activities of short-term (individuals' intention to return within a relatively short period of time, not more than one consecutive year away from their normal home and work) travelling to and staying in various destinations outside their common environment for pleasure, business and other purposes (e.g., Middleton & Clarke, 2002; Wall & Mathieson, 2005; Raju, 2009; McCabe, 2010). Tourism industry generates 6 trillion dollars per year to the global economy (Tsiotsou & Goldsmith, 2012) and thus it constitutes a powerful economic force providing jobs, income, foreign exchange and tax revenue (Hudson, 2008).

Tourism, travel and hospitality industry is dynamic, encompasses both goods/products and services and the purchase process involves an underlying uncertainty and it is typically expensive (Cai, 2002; Hudson, 2008). Therefore, *“the decision involves greater risk and extensive information search, and depends on tourists' mental construct of what a potential destination has to offer relative to their needs”* (Cai, 2002: 721).

Goods are easier to be explored, measured, analyzed and evaluated, while services constitute a greater challenge (Hudson, 2008). Goods are produced, whereas services are performed (Rathmell, 1974). Service products are mainly differentiated from goods products by four distinct features: intangibility, heterogeneity, inseparability and perishability (Zeithaml, 1981). These unique features of services signify the consumers' involvement in the service process of production and consumption (Tsiotsou & Goldsmith, 2012).



(1) Intangibility: Service products cannot be seen, tasted, felt, heard, smelt, inspected or tested prior to purchase and thus a risk factor on the part of the purchaser is entailed (Holloway, 2004). For example tourists can not test the destinations before their visit (Gartner, 1989; Eby, Molnar & Cai 1999). Before boarding a plane, passengers have only their ticket and a promise of safe delivery to their destination (Hudson, 2008). Thus an uncertainty and risk element is entailed on the part of the buyer (Holloway, 2004; Hudson, 2008). To decrease uncertainty and risk stemming from service intangibility, purchasers/consumers search for tangible evidence that will give more service information and confidence (Holloway, 2004; Hudson, 2008).

(2) Inseparability: Certainly, the service nature is highly personalized, the product is the outcome of the service providers' performance and service providers' social skills in dealing with consumers are a vital part of the product (Holloway, 2004). For numerous services, the product cannot be generated or delivered without the customer's presence (Holloway, 2004; Hudson, 2008). For example, the airline cabin staff, who please our desires en route, the hotel or restaurant representatives who greet us on arrival as well as the hotel's front office receptionist - all are product features that we are buying (Holloway, 2004). A dining dish may be excellent, but if the server has a poor attitude or delivers careless service, customers will not cherish the overall dining experience (Hudson, 2008). In addition, other customers could influence the service experience (Hudson, 2008).

(3) Heterogeneity: For tangible products, mass production methods can ensure that each part/element of the product produced is homogeneous and standardized with each unit sharing identical characteristics (Holloway, 2004). With good quality control, problems or drawbacks appear very rarely, and the consumer can be assured of a certain product homogeneity and quality (Holloway, 2004). This does not hold with services, since service delivery quality depends on the service provider (Hudson, 2008). By purchasing a service, like tourism, a consumer is actually purchasing various services provided by different individuals (e.g., flight, accommodation, transportation, nutrition), and these are very difficult to control (Holloway, 2004). Even with package tours (all inclusive), which have gone a long way to facilitate and



achieve the travel product standardization (flight, transfer, nutrition and hotel room), there are parts or product features over which the tour operator can not control, such as weather conditions. Having holidays with continuous rainfall is a very different product from one having sunshine (Holloway, 2004). Moreover, the same provider may deliver varying service levels, with a considerable discrepancy in friendliness and tolerance as the day goes by (Hudson, 2008). For example, a hotel waiter, who has faced a hard personal moment the night before will probably not deliver the same friendly service at breakfast as that he/she had render at dinner the previous day (Holloway, 2004). Although good quality control management practices can facilitate to decrease extreme performance fluctuations, they cannot surpass the human problems inherent in the tourism services performance (Holloway, 2004).

(4) Perishability: By nature, services cannot be stored (Hudson, 2008). It is impossible to sell vacant airline seats or hotel rooms the day after (Hudson, 2008).

Tourism products are perceived as services (Fyall & Garrod, 2005). In addition to the service characteristics, the distinctiveness of the tourism industry is met in features such as seasonality, globalization, complexity and loyalty low levels, as well as cross and income elasticity demand (Tsiotsou & Goldsmith, 2012).

*Seasonality* constitutes a feature of the majority of leisure tourism markets and it is described as “*a temporal imbalance in the phenomenon of tourism, which may be expressed in terms of dimensions of such elements as number of visitors, expenditure of visitors, traffic on highways and other forms of transportation, employment and admission to attractions*” (Butler, 2001: 5). In other words, seasonality is about peaks and troughs in demand- demand varies considerably from season to season- (Hudson, 2008).

*Globalization* in tourism means that “*tourism businesses have the ability to operate and market themselves not only locally but globally as well, while many of them have opted for a competitive strategy of internationalization*” (Tsiotsou & Goldsmith, 2012: xxxii).

Tourism is featured by low levels of customer loyalty, as consumers seeking novel experiences by visiting different destinations, locations and places and destinations



around the world (Tsiotsou & Goldsmith, 2012: xxxii). Moreover, tourism is perceived as a complex industry because it includes multiple subsectors and services, such as , accommodation, amenities, food and beverage, recreation, transportation and travel. All these services are usually offered by different providers and create the tourism experience (Tsiotsou & Goldsmith, 2012: xxxiii). Finally, tourism services are characterized by a (a) cross elasticity demand meaning that holidays can be easily replaced buying another product (e.g. purchasing a car may delay individuals' travelling for a period of time until they fully pay the cost of their car) and (b) income elasticity demand, where a decrease in an individual's income could result in substantial drop of his/her tourism services demand (Tsiotsou & Goldsmith, 2012: xxxiii).

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### 2.1.1.TOURISM MARKETING

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Tourism services across the globe are constantly facing new challenges as well as rapid environmental changes (e.g., fierce competition, market globalization, technological advances), are increasingly incorporating marketing principles in their management and becoming more market oriented (Tsiotsou, 2010; Tsiotsou & Vlachopoulou, 2011; Tsiotsou & Goldsmith, 2012). The most effective way for tourism firms to respond to new challenges and changes is through integrated marketing strategies (Tsiotsou & Goldsmith, 2012). Marketing is the key management tool that can be applied to form the size and behavior of a focal, growing global market, like tourism, since it harnesses the power of massive commercial forces as well as government and regulatory influences (Middleton, Fyall, Morgan & Ranchhod, 2009). As a global market, tourism, leisure and travel industry is best understood in terms of demand and supply (Middleton et al., 2009). Marketing is the fundamental linkage mechanism between demand and supply, which focuses on exchange transactions in which consumers show desires, preferences and choices, and exchange their money and time in return for the supply of particular travel experiences, services or products (Middleton et al., 2009). *“Tourism marketing is a management philosophy that, in the light of tourist demand, makes it possible through*



*research, forecasting and selection to place tourism products on the market in line with the origins purpose for greatest benefits” (Coltman, 1989: 11).*

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## 2.1.1. TOURISM DESTINATIONS & DESTINATION MARKETING

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### 2.1.1.1. TOURISM DESTINATIONS

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The concept of a tourism “destination” is focal to the tourism industry and all places can potentially become tourism destinations (McCabe, 2010). Tourism destination is defined by numerous ways in the literature. Bornhorst, Ritchie, and Sheehan (2010: 572) define a destination as *“a geographical region which contains a sufficiently critical mass or cluster of attractions so as to be capable of providing tourists with visitation experiences that attract them to the destination for tourism purposes”*. *Tourism destination is also described as an amalgam of interrelated supply firms/ organizations/ institutions as well as numerous “tangible products and intangible services provided in a geographic location to which tourists are willing to travel to”* (Jiang, 2019:54, based on Pearce, 1989; Snepenger, Snepenger, Dalbey & Wessol, 2007). A destination can be also considered as a *“home full of feelings and intimacy, albeit different in nature from the conventional home”* (Trauer & Ryan, 2005: 482), and leisure activities need to lean on fantasies, feelings and emotions in order to explain tourist behavior (Sanchez, Callarisa, Rodriguez & Moliner, 2006). Destinations are geographic or/and metaphysical locations to which tourists travel (Framke, 2002; Campelo, Aitken, Thyne & Gnoth, 2014) and that are assigned with meanings and values by society and individuals (Halpenny, 2010; Campelo, Aitken, Thyne & Gnoth, 2014).

A destination consists of both tangible and intangible components (e.g., Hu & Ritchie, 1993; Murphy, Pritchard, & Smith, 2000) and, over time, its importance and meaning differs between individuals, groups and cultures (Halpenny, 2010). In social sciences, it has been argued that places or destinations constitute the fundamental basis of affiliation and identification, which give meaning and purpose to life (Williams & Vaske, 2003). Individuals can create an affective connection with specific destinations or places (Hidalgo & Hernandez, 2001, as cited in Hosany & Gilbert, 2010), as well



as with their immediate environment (Machleit & Eroglu, 2000), in which meanings, beliefs and values are attached (Sack, 1992). More and more attention is paid to investigating the feelings that people assign and develop towards important places in their lives (Hernandez, Hidalgo, Salazar-Laplace & Hess, 2007), and various studies have been carried out to shed light on the role of emotions in tourism and hospitality context (Hosany & Gilbert, 2010). A place can be classified into three levels:

Table 2: The levels of a place

Level One: A descriptive approach to place	Concerned with the distinctiveness and particularity of places; The world is a set of places, each of which can be studied as a unique and particular entity.
Level Two: A social constructionist approach to place	Considers the particularity of place, but as instances of more general underlying social processes; Emphasises the unique attributes of place.
Level Three: A phenomenological approach to place	Unconcerned with the unique attributes of particular places, or social forces involved in construction of place; Seeks to identify the essence of human existence as one that is necessarily and importantly 'in-place'; Less concerned with 'places' and more interested in 'Place'.

(adapted from Cresswell, 2015:56, as cited in Jarratt, Phelan, Wain & Dale, 2019)

#### 2.1.1.2. DESTINATION MARKETING

Destination marketing has increasingly gained recognition in both business and academia (Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2008; Gertner, 2011; Swanson, 2015), since it constitutes a cornerstone of the tourism destinations' future growth and sustainability in an increasingly globalised and competitive tourism market (UNWTO, 2011; Pike & Page, 2013). Destination marketing facilitates the achievement of destination tourism policy and contributes to the optimization of the tourism impacts and the maximization of destination benefits (Buhalis, 2000). Destination/place marketing can be regarded as *“the coordinated use of marketing tools supported by a shared*





*customer-oriented philosophy, for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging urban offerings that have value for the city's customers and the city's community at large*" (Braun, 2008: 43) and its objective is to contribute to the destination's efficient economic and social (e.g., satisfaction, identification) functioning, in accordance with the broader goals that have been set for this particular place (Ashworth & Voogd, 1990). A customer-focused approach is focal to destination marketing, which should be based on the needs of all (potential) destination's customers, such as residents and visitors (Zenker, Braun & Petersen, 2017). The first step in this process is to build a destination shared mental representation, a destination brand (Zenker, Braun & Petersen, 2017).

Even though the concept of branding has been vastly applied to consumer products, the concept of tourism destination branding is still in its infancy, as it constitutes a relatively recent phenomenon (Blain, Levy & Ritchie, 2005; Hosany, Ekinci & Uysal, 2006; Park & Petrick, 2006; Baker, 2012) and seems to be rising as one of the most compelling tools for destination practitioners and marketers, who seek to achieve a competitive advantage (Murphy, Benckendorff & Moscardo, 2007). Destination brands are multidimensional (Kaplan, Yurt, Guneri, & Kurtulus, 2010; Zenker & Martin, 2011), "*socially constructed meaning systems*" (Warnaby & Medway, 2013: 348) and various conceptualizations have been suggested (Hankinson, 2015). A place brand can be conceived as "*a network of associations in the place consumers' mind based on the visual, verbal, and behavioural expression of a place, which is embodied through the aims, communication, values, and the general culture of the place's stakeholders and the overall place design*" (Zenker & Braun, 2010: 4). Destination branding is defined as "*the set of marketing activities that (1) support the creation of a name, symbol, logo, word, mark or other graphic that readily identifies and differentiates a destination; that (2) consistently convey the expectation of a memorable travel experience that is uniquely associated with the destination; that (3) serve to consolidate and reinforce the emotional connection between the visitor and the destination; and that (4) reduce consumer search costs and perceived risk*" (Blain et al., 2005: 337).

However, some readers may question the application of already entrenched branding principles to destinations (Giannopoulos, Piha & Avlonitis, 2011). Of course, a tourism destination is multi-attributed per se (Pike, 2005) and inherently complex, as





it is grounded on innumerable services, products and experiences, which are all managed, distributed and “consumed” by various stakeholders, for instance travel agencies, tourists, hoteliers, tour operators, destination management organizations, residents and so on (Konecnik & Go, 2008; Giannopoulos, Piha & Avlonitis, 2011). Various academics have argued that the principles of product brands do not apply and cannot be transferred directly to services or tourist destinations (e.g., Aaker, 1991, Girard, 1999; Knowles, 2001; Keller, 2003, Konecnik & Gartner, 2007), since places/destinations have a completely distinct nature from businesses/corporations and entail some unique features that are quite different from consumer goods or services (Girard, 1999; Freire, 2009). According to this stream of academics, places/destinations/cities are not characterized by a single body or clarity of focus to drive branding or to be managed under a branding conceptual framework (Parkerson & Saunders, 2005), even though they will always be embedded with a meaning for tourists and function as a brand (Freire, 2004). However, it is imperative that the different nature of destination brands from that of product brands should be taken into account by academics and practitioners. In contrast to brand leading firms, destinations/cities do not have an organizational structure to manage the mechanisms needed to fit and build branding (Parkerson & Saunders, 2005). Furthermore, the uniqueness of a destination brand relies mainly on its form as a network of entities encompassing a variety of stakeholders rather than a single entity, such as an organization, with internal structures and clear boundaries (Parkerson & Saunders, 2005). A destination/place is an intricate network of tourists, local government, public services, economic agents, tourism providers, organizations, business associations, employees, institutions, local people and partnerships with varied and often competing interests that can form and/or change the structure of the destination (Parkerson & Saunders, 2005; Ban, Popa, & Silaghi, 2011). Due to the lack of destinations’ organizational boundaries, their rational features rely not just on one firm, but on a network of numerous corporations and individuals. Each may have its own unique values, vision, corporate culture, mission, heritage, policies, functional capability, personality and services (Parkerson & Saunders, 2005). They might collaborate closely with one another, they might be competitors or they might not be aware of the existence of (all) the others in network (Parkerson & Saunders, 2005). Each of them will- in a varying extend and degree- give information to tourists about



the destination brand and the tourist will conceive this information holistically (Parkerson & Saunders, 2005). This dynamic is reflected in the response relationships between the brand and consumers (Parkerson & Saunders, 2005). Stability marks a significant difference between destination brands and product brands (e.g., Ban, Popa, & Silaghi, 2011). Product brands remain stable and this stability is maintained by the use of quality standards (Ban, Popa, & Silaghi, 2011). On the other hand, a destination/ place brand is characterized by an inherent lack of stability and consistency (Parkerson & Saunders, 2005; Ban, Popa, & Silaghi, 2011). The question, therefore, whether the standard mechanisms for managing a service or product brand (sequential planning stages: vision, mission, values and corporate culture) can be applied to a destination brand still remains (Parkerson & Saunders, 2005; Ban, Popa, & Silaghi, 2011). The destination/place as a network posits a great and unique challenge for strategic brand models developed in the literature for services and products, in that networks are not effective at allocating resources to a specific purpose and centralizing the decision-making process due to the lack of the strategic center of places and thus their lack of clear organizational boundaries (Parkerson & Saunders, 2005).

Moreover, numerous academics define the complex tourism product as an experience (Middleton, 1979; Taylor, 1980; Graefe & Vaske, 1987; Mannell & Iso-Ahola, 1987; Smith, 1989; Otto & Ritchie, 1996), since the tourism product covers the complete experience from the moment someone leaves home until he/she returns to it (Medlik & Middleton, 1973; Go, 1981). Destinations constitute a mixture of tourism products, offering an integrated experience to consumers (Buhalis, 2000). In addition, a destination can be seen as a function of memorable experiences, which constitute *the essence and the raison d'être of the hospitality industry* (Pizam, 2010: 343). Hence an additional major distinction between products and destinations is the *experiential* factor. The products/services of a destination are experiential by nature and they may be perceived differently by each individual because of the internalization of the experience (Ban, Popa, & Silaghi, 2011). A destination cannot be tried, felt, seen before purchase and consumption/ visit (Gartner, 1989; Eby, Molnar & Cai 1999). Therefore the idea of having a guarantee is excluded (Ban, Popa, & Silaghi, 2011) and a risk factor on the part of the purchaser is entailed (Holloway, 2004; Hudson, 2008). In the tourism field, the consumption experience is characterized by intangibility,



dynamism and subjectivity (Botterill & Crompton, 1996; Jayanti & Ghosh, 1996), which make it a complicated construct (Williams & Soutar, 2009). *“Tourism consumption experiences include a complex mix of functional, objective and tangible components (e.g., travelling, eating, drinking, and recreating), as well as subjective, hedonic, emotional and symbolic components (e.g., enjoying an experience, laughing, socialising and having fun)”* (Williams & Soutar, 2009: 415). Tourist’s experience lies at the heart of the destination product (Clawson & Knetsch, 1966; Vittersø, Vorkinn, Vistad & Vaagland, 2000; Swarbrooke, 2002; Jennings & Nickerson, 2006) and it is formed by many small different tourist encounters elements (e.g., receptionists, waiters, public services in the destination), and by various elements of the local attractions such as monuments, archaeological sites, national parks and beaches (Zouni & Kouremenos, 2008).

In a nutshell, the lack of a strategic center and clear organisational boundaries as well as the experiential factor of destinations stress and highlight the differentiation of destination brands from product brands. Therefore, entrenched brand characteristics, values, concepts and models developed for businesses should be modified properly and adapted the structures and systems of destinations’ distinct characteristics in order to fit a destination- network context better and more efficiently (Parkerson & Saunders, 2005; Konecnik & Gartner, 2007; Ban, Popa, & Silaghi, 2011).

On the other hand, there are academics who support that a tourism destination can be considered as a product or a brand and thus the brand concept can be transferred to that of tourism destination in a much the same way (Van Raaij, 1986; McIntosh & Goeldner, 1990; Hong-bumm, 1998; de Chernatony and Dall’Olmo Riley, 1999; Buhalis, 2000; Morgan & Pritchard, 2000; Papadopoulos & Heslop, 2002; Olins, 2002; Anholt, 2002; Cai, 2002; Kotler & Gertner, 2002; Kozak, 2002; Hankinson, 2003; Caldwell & Freire, 2004; Beerli & Martin, 2004; Yoon & Uysal, 2005; Lucarelli & Berg, 2011; Giannopoulos, Piha & Avlonitis, 2011; Hankinson, 2015), and it has to be managed from a strategic point of view (Beerli & Martin, 2004) and sold in the most advantageous terms in the tourism market (e.g., Ban, Popa, & Silaghi, 2011). Numerous aspects of branding have been adapted to a destination/place context, such as brand communities (Levy & Hassay, 2005), brand image (Blain et al., 2005), and brand equity (Gartner & Ruzzier, 2011).



The notion of destination/place brands entails that people could form positive memorable travel experiences for a specific destination, which could lead to their repeat visitations to this destination in order to recollect enjoyable memories of the destination experience (Pike, 2005). *“Tourist destinations are rich in terms of experiential attributes, and the potential to evoke an emotional response is even greater”* (Otto & Ritchie 1996, as cited in Hosany & Gilbert, 2010: 515). Stressing the importance of feelings and emotions in destination branding, Morgan and Pritchard (2004:61) claimed that *“the battle for consumers in tomorrow’s destination marketplace will be fought not over price but over hearts and minds”*.

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## 2.2. EMOTIONS

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Approximately four decades have passed by, since academics initiated studying emotions in consumption (Peterson, Hoyer & Wilson, 1986). More recently, the amount of research that is carried out about emotions within the boundaries of the marketing field has risen steeply (Bagozzi, Gopinath & Nyer 1999; Dube & Menon 2000; Smith & Bolton, 2002; Bigne & Andreu, 2004).

While it is recognized that consumption emotions are a crucial as well as a growing and attractive research area in the field of marketing (Smith & Bolton, 2002), understanding the nature of emotions is not easy, because the very nature and logical form of emotions is highly debated and not directly well understood (Ekman, 1994; Shweder, 1994; Panksepp, 1994; Averill, 1994). After all, it is difficult to explain emotions only by logic.

There are various definitions of emotions in the literature and there is little consistency in the use of emotion-related terminology (Bagozzi, Gopinath & Nyer, 1999). According to Keltner and Gross (1999: 468) emotion is an *“episodic, relatively short-term, biologically based patterns of perception, experience, physiology, action, and communication that occur in response to special physical and social challenges and opportunities”*. Frijda (1986:4) defines emotion as *“non-instrumental behaviours and non-instrumental features of behaviour, physiological changes, and evaluative, subject-related experiences, as evoked by external or*



*internal events*". Furthermore, *"emotions are short-lived, subjective feelings that occur in the foreground of consciousness, demand immediate attention, and motivate behavior"* (Frijda, 2007, as cited in Lin, Kerstetter, Nawijn & Mitas, 2014: 417). Bagozzi, Gopinath and Nyer (1999: 184) state that *"emotions are mental states of readiness that arise from appraisals of events or one's own thoughts"*.

There is a debate in academia concerning how emotions should and could be studied by researchers (Swanson, Medway & Warnaby, 2015). Interpretivist academics argue that emotions should be explored as "lived experience" and that this requires qualitative research strategies, so that provide a "richer" and more profound picture of the situation (Sturdy 2003; Swanson, Medway & Warnaby, 2015). Hence academics in the field of emotions would advocate the use of qualitative methods (Swanson, Medway & Warnaby, 2015). Indeed, when considering love specifically, some even go as far as to say that *"there is no way of studying it other than through language and how one speaks and writes about it because one knows emotions only intuitively and thus cannot use "precise terms" to communicate them"* (Sturdy 2003: 89, as cited in Swanson et al., 2015: 2). After all, the exclusive use of quantitative methods in emotion research has been questioned (Roberts, 2005; Swanson, Medway & Warnaby, 2015). Roberts (2005) argues that emotion research that is based exclusively on quantitative methods *"will not get at the true insights necessary"* (Roberts 2005; as cited in Swanson et al., 2015: 2).

Marketers and the majority of social scientists agree that emotion plays a crucial role in social behavior, cognition and action (Morrison & Crane, 2007). There are two different schools of thought on the exact nature of emotion itself (Fiske & Taylor, 1991; Bagozzi, Gopinath & Nyer, 1999). The first school of academics fathoms, from a cognitive processing perspective, that emotion is the outcome of the cognitive assessment of a stimulus, an evaluation entrenched in an individual's past and cognitive mind set (Lazarus, 1984). On the basis of these theories, pre-conscious cognition (or appraisal) is essential for emotion to arise; appraisal interprets meaningful stimuli in terms of personal wellbeing importance (Morrison & Crane, 2007). On the other hand, the other group of academics argues that emotion is purely physiological. Based on this stance, emotion is the physiological response to a stimulus, which results in certain cognitions but is completely separate from the cognitive process (Shachter & Singer, 1962). The same academics state that diffuse



physiological arousal stemming from a stimulus activates cognitive interpretation, but that no emotions are mediated by cognitions or appraisals (Shachter & Singer, 1962). The physiological perspective of emotion has been endorsed by numerous academics (Morrison & Crane, 2007). Moreover, academics in social sciences have shown that mere exposure to an object can make this object likeable (Zajonc, 1968).

Academics in the tourism and marketing fields use two major approaches to describe emotions, the first is the basic approach and the second is the dimensional approach (e.g., Lin, Kerstetter, Nawijn & Mitas, 2014; Hadinejad, Moyle, Scott & Kralj, 2019). The basic approach (e.g., Zelenski & Larsen, 2000) can identify the type of emotion and it suggests six or more basic emotions, such as happiness, anger, sadness, fear, surprise and disgust. However, this approach cannot measure the dimension of emotional responses. The dimensional approach differentiates emotions on two dimensions, valence and arousal (Shen & Morris, 2016). The categorization of emotions of this approach entails the pleasure-arousal-dominance (P-A-D) (Russell, 1980), the circumplex (Watson & Tellegen, 1985), and the positive affect- negative affect schedule (PANAS) (Watson, Clark & Tellegen, 1988) models. Tourism researchers have used the positive-negative emotions dichotomy, since it exemplifies the positive effects vacationing has on tourists' emotions (Lin, Kerstetter, Nawijn & Mitas, 2014). Some other tourism academics have used in their studies the pleasure and arousal dimensions (Russell, 1980) that outline a rotation of the more common positive-negative emotions model (Lin, Kerstetter, Nawijn & Mitas, 2014). In particular, pleasure denotes the degree to which the person feels good with the surrounding environmental context, whereas arousal reflects the degree to which the individual feels stimulated or emotionally activated (Bitner, 1992; Lin et al., 2014). Irrespective of the basic or dimensional category academics employ to explore emotions, they should take into consideration the fact that emotions of the same valence vary in their impacts on individual's behaviors and perceptions (Lin et al., 2014).





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### 2.2.1. EMOTIONS VERSUS MOODS, AFFECT AND ATTITUDES

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Emotions and experiences are crucial concepts in consumer research, since they influence the choice behavior of consumers (Goossens, 2000). There is affective involvement or/and cognitive involvement in choice behavior of consumers. On the one hand consumers make their choices by processing (all) the information available for the brand/service (cognitive mode) and on the other hand when consumers recognize a new stimulus, they try to encode it as analogous to something that exists in their mind and with which an affect is already linked and transfer that affect to the service or product (Goossens, 2000). Different persons react in a different way to stimulus they encounter. Their reactions are influenced by their previous experiences, the emotional experience the stimulus generates as well as the social and personality images that are linked with the use of service/product (Goossens, 2000). The more expressive the product, the more likely the affective involvement in consumer decision making (Mittal, 1994). Affect intensity- the personal variation in the intensity of emotional response to a given level of affect stimulus- differs across different individuals (Moore, Harris & Chen, 1995; Goossens, 2000). Emotions and feelings influence attitude towards the advertisements and brands (Burke & Edell, 1989; Holbrook & Westwood, 1989; Derbaix, 1995). Individuals tend to seek emotional situations, they use emotion and cherish emotional stimuli when interacting with their social environment (Goossens, 2000).

Tourism is inseparably linked with experiences. Hence it can be assumed that the “experiential” aspects of destination consumption, which engender emotions, fun, feelings, moods, attitudes and fantasies, among others, play a crucial role in tourist behavior. To market the services and products of destinations well, tourism marketers should comprehend the factors that influence tourists’ decisions and their consumer behavior. In tourism marketing, the choice behavior of tourists about leisure services is influenced by the sensation that is encompassing the anticipated leisure experience (Goossens, 2000). After all, imagination, daydreaming as well as emotions play a crucial role in holiday choice behavior (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982; MacInnis & Price, 1987; Mannell & Iso-Ahola, 1987).



In general, it should be noted that the terms *attitudes*, *emotions*, *affect*, and *moods* have often been used inconsistently by academics (Bagozzi, Gopinath & Nyer, 1999). Academics should be cautious when they refer to the above mentioned terms and of course it is crucial to both define clearly the terms as well as to operationalize with precision the variables to which the terms refer, since some researchers have defined important variables as moods, emotions or attitudes but they have used operationalizations referring to different constructs (Bagozzi et al., 1999). There should be a clear distinction among emotions, moods and attitudes, since all of them are mental states of readiness, but there are some key differences.

Affect constitutes a general indicator of a “*valenced feeling state*” (Cohen & Areni, 1991), where emotions as well as moods are perceived to be specific instances of affective states (Goossens, 2000). Thus, *affect* can be perceived as an umbrella for a set of more specific mental processes incorporating moods, emotions and (possibly) attitudes (Bagozzi, Gopinath & Nyer, 1999). Emotion can be seen as states characterized by episodes of intense feelings linked with a specific stimulus (Goossens, 2000), and thus they are typically intentional- i.e., it has an object or referent- (Bagozzi, Gopinath & Nyer, 1999). According to Bagozzi et al. (1999: 184) emotion is “*a mental state of readiness that arises from cognitive appraisals of events or thoughts; has a phenomenological tone; is accompanied by physiological processes; is often expressed physically (e.g., in gestures, posture, facial features); and may result in specific actions to affirm or cope with the emotion, depending on its nature and meaning for the person having it*”. Emotions are more intense than attitudes or moods (Bagozzi et al., 1999). Intensity refers to the strength of subjective experience people feel, plus the degree of their psychological responses (e.g., autonomic nervous system) and the magnitude of their bodily expression (e.g. facial manifestations), when these reactions accompany an emotion (Bagozzi et al., 1999). Drawing the line between mood and emotion is usually hard. Mood is generally described as less intense feelings characterized by diffuseness and lack of a stimulus object, and thus it can be seen as non intentional and global or diffused (Frijda, 1993; Bagozzi, Gopinath & Nyer, 1999; Goossens, 2000). In addition, an important difference among moods, emotions and attitudes is in the way emotions emerge, since emotions have a particular referent (Bagozzi et al., 1999). For instance, a consumer becomes satisfied when a new smartphone gives him/her more options in order to





meet his needs and dissatisfied by poor service in a hotel). Moreover, mood is conceived as being longer lasting (from a few hours up to days) (Frijda,1993; Bagozzi, Gopinath & Nyer,1999; Goossens, 2000). Furthermore, emotions and moods differentiate in that people are often aware of their emotions while longer emotional states such as moods are less intense and more general, and may operate beneath consciousness (Goossens, 2000). Additionally, moods are not as directly linked with explicit actions and action tendencies as are many emotions (Bagozzi, Gopinath & Nyer,1999). In few words, emotions have been differentiated from longer affective states such as moods by associating with specific objects or events, being more intense and attention getting (Goossens, 2000).

Emotions emerge in response of appraisals someone makes for something of relevance (an incident that happens to oneself-such as an unplanned event-, a behavior, a transformation in an object/person or personal thoughts) to one's wellbeing (Bagozzi et al., 1999). Emotions arise by the unique psychological appraisals that are made by the persons assessing and depicting the physical circumstances or events that appear around them (Bagozzi et al., 1999). The emotional reactions towards the events vary across different people. Appraisals play a fundamental role in the emotional arousal and they can be deliberate, purposive, conscious, but also automatic, unconscious and unreflective (Bagozzi et al., 1999). In psychology, appraisal theories support that the fundamental determinant of any emotion is the resultant assessment and interpretation that pop up after the comparison of a desired and actual state (Bagozzi et al., 1999).

According to Bagozzi et al. (1999), apart from moods and emotions, attitudes are usually perceived as examples of affect as well, with the same measures used on occasion to indicate emotions and attitudes (e.g., pleasant-unpleasant, happy-sad, or interested-bored semantic differential items). Some scholars, however, view attitudes from a narrower perspective and perceive them as evaluative judgments (measured, e.g., by good-bad reactions) rather than emotional states (Bagozzi, Gopinath & Nyer,1999). For example, the academics Cohen & Areni (1991) describe *affect* as “*valenced feeling states*”, with moods and emotions as specific examples. They perceived attitudes as evaluative judgments. Nevertheless, some other academics do not make a specific differentiation between affect and evaluative judgments. For instance, Eagly & Chaiken (1993) state that Fishbein & Ajzen (1975) as well as other



academics in social psychology have “*regarded affect as isomorphic with evaluation itself and used the terms interchangeably*” (p. 12). Still some other researchers point out that attitudes have two distinct, but generally highly associated components: cognitive (or evaluative) and affective dimensions (Bagozzi, Gopinath & Nyer, 1999). Empirical evidence support this interpretation (Bagozzi & Burnkrant, 1979; Breckler & Wiggins, 1989; Batra & Ahtola, 1990; Crites, Fabrigar & Petty, 1994; Eagly, Mladinic & Otto, 1994).

An additional difference among emotions, moods and attitudes lies in the way they emerge as well as in their representation in peoples’ memory (Bagozzi et al., 1999). More specifically, emotions are evoked by the changes in particular plans or goal-relevant events (Bagozzi et al., 1999). Hence emotions can be seen as “*transitions from one sequence of action to another*”, whereas moods appear “*when the cognitive system is maintained in an emotion mode for a period*” (Oatley, 1992: 64, 91-92), since moods are frequently not susceptible to changes in events (Bagozzi et al., 1999). Attitudes can be evoked by changes in events (like emotions), but also they can arise in response to ordinary objects (Bagozzi et al., 1999). Moreover, arousal is an essential part of emotions, but the same does not hold for the attitudes necessarily (Bagozzi et al., 1999). In addition, attitudes can be conserved for long periods of time and retrieved, whereas emotions are not experienced in the same way, since they constitute ongoing states of readiness, they are not stored and retrieved like attitudes, even though people can bring in their mind the conditions that generated the emotions and react emotionally to the thoughts that are produced again (Bagozzi et al., 1999). Emotions directly trigger volitions and action, whereas attitudes might need an additional motivation stimulus, like desire (Bagozzi, 1992).

According to Hegner et al. (2017:3), “*while emotions are transient affective states related to a certain situation, love is a stable psychological phenomenon that is a combination of attitudes, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors*”.

Academic studies in the field of neuroscience has stressed that love goes beyond an emotion and rather functions as a goal-oriented state or motivation that leads to various emotions and behaviors (Aron, Fisher, Mashek, Strong, Li & Brown, 2005). Despite the endurance of love, studies have shown that love is perceived a dynamic, multi-faceted concept “*including multiple cognitions, emotions, and behaviors, which consumers organize into a mental prototype*” (Batra et al., 2012: 2), and it transits via



different stages over time (Huber, Meyer & Schmid, 2015; Langner et al., 2015, 2016).

This study views emotion as a state of physical and mental readiness that involves evaluative appraisal, valence (directional force), a target (or object or stimulus) and behavioural tendencies. In other words, emotion in this study is perceived as a mental state of readiness that arises from cognitive appraisals of events or thoughts; is accompanied by physiological processes; is often expressed physically (e.g., in gestures, posture, facial features and expressions); has a phenomenological tone; and may result in particular actions to affirm or cope with the emotion, depending on its nature and meaning for the individual experiencing it, following the approach of Bagozzi, Gopinath & Nyer (1999). This research lies with the view of Morrison and Crane (2007) who state that whether or not emotions are primarily physical responses or primarily pre-conscious cognitive evaluations that result in a physical response is a somewhat esoteric argument. In addition, the most important point is that all academics, irrespective of the stream, agree that emotions exist, motivate behavior and change the way individuals view the world (Morrison & Crane, 2007). How exactly emotions motivate or change behavior has been a thorny question for social scientists throughout the years. This research focuses on one small part of that question, that is how tourists' develop love emotions/relationships towards destinations and how destination marketers can create, influence and manage successful emotional destination experiences that ultimately lead to emotional and consequently to loyal and devoted tourists.

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### 2.2.2. CULTURAL VARIATIONS IN EMOTIONS

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Every human being is unique, each with their own (physical or mental) characteristics, personalities, lifestyles, experiences, instincts, desires, traits, qualities, idiosyncrasies, natural talents, intellect, sociocultural backgrounds, physical capabilities and genes. However, the society in which people live and act determines many times the way of their thinking and behaving in many everyday aspects. Thus, a question arises. Do people react and feel in a same or different way in emotional stimulus? Do they interpret emotions such as “love”, “attachment”, “fear”, “anger”,



“happiness” in a distinct or universal way? Is the variety of emotions universal or cultural in nature?

In the literature, emotions have integrated both universal and cultural differences (Elfenbein & Ambady, 2003). Many researchers in the literature of psychology have stressed that people recognize the emotions in a universal way, arguing that this skill is not learned, but rather it incorporates an evolutionary and thus a biological basis (Elfenbein & Ambady, 2003). However, more recently, academics have tried to investigate how variations across cultures may influence the universal processes entailed in expressing and understanding emotions (Elfenbein & Ambady, 2003).

According to Mesquita & Leu (2007), people are not living and raised in a uniform environment. Therefore, their emotions are not, most of the times, expressed by the same way, since human beings function in a specific cultural setting and emotions in turn help navigating this specific cultural setting (Mesquita & Leu, 2007). Emotions are inseparably linked with people’s social life (Frijda & Mesquita, 1994; Keltner & Haidt, 1999), they mirror humans’ sociocultural setting and they function as heuristics for action stimulating people toward action that bolsters certain end goals (Mesquita & Leu, 2007). In line with the view of Mesquita & Leu (2007), Frijda & Mesquita (1994) and Keltner & Haidt, (1999), Ratner (2000) states that humans spent most of their lives and thus their activities in a socially structured and organized context. Hence, their character and personality is formed by their societal and cultural environment. In practice, this means that human beings are stimulated by socially organized activities and events and eventually they form collective concepts about incidents and people (Ratner, 2000). Their opinions and actions are derived from their societal system of law, religion, customs, habits, social structures and mentality (Mauss, 1938/1985; Ratner, 2000). In addition, humans’ psychological responses are derived from their social activities and eventually their corresponding cultural context (Ratner, 2000). After all, an emotion does not entirely rely on a unique concept, but on several ones (Ratner, 2000). These encompass an understanding of the immediate stimulus (the event, object, person, behavior) that encounters oneself, the social setting in which the stimulus appears, and the needs and capabilities of the person (Ratner, 2000). For instance, whether a student feels shameful about having cheated in an exam depends not only on the act itself but upon whether his/her social environment (e.g., fellow students) has noticed it, been critical to him/her and cared



about his/her reaction. More academics emphasize that indeed emotions are not universal, but cultural driven. According to Armon-Jones (1986 :33; cf. Kleinman & Good, 1985; 65) “*emotions are characterized by attitudes such as beliefs, judgments, and desires, the contents of which are not natural, but are determined by the systems of cultural belief, value and moral value of particular communities*”.

Moreover, Kleinman, (1980: 171) states that “*affects are not merely handled differently by culturally constituted cognitive coping processes, such processes engender affects whose very natures differ significantly [in different societies]*” Moreover, emotions are sociocultural creations (Middleton, 1989) and thus it can be figured out that people of different cultures who speak different languages can recognize and categorize emotions somewhat differently (Russell, 1991).

On the other hand, some other academics support the universality of emotions. For instance, they state that people who have different cultural backgrounds can watch a foreign film or listen foreign music and understand much of their original feelings in the same way (Elfenbein & Ambady, 2003). Hence, emotional expressions and messages can eliminate the cultural differences (Elfenbein & Ambady, 2003). Furthermore, Russell (1991) argues that there are evidence of apparent similarity of emotions even when people have considerable differences in their language and culture (Russell, 1991). This universality of emotions has to do with being human rather than being a member of a specific culture (Russell, 1991).

Even though some of emotional expressions and messages can remain the same across different cultures, some others get lost beyond the cultural barriers (Elfenbein & Ambady, 2003). For example, when people travel, live or work in a different cultural setting, they may develop an impression that their communication messages are misinterpreted more frequently by people who come from different cultures than from people who have the same cultural background (Elfenbein & Ambady, 2003). Hence, it can be argued that the expression of emotions is largely universal, but there are subtle differences across cultures that can help in understanding the emotions (Elfenbein & Ambady, 2003).

In addition, Tomkins & McCarter (1964) argue that differentiated expressions of emotions across cultures can be seen as “*dialects*” of the “*more universal grammar of emotion*” (p. 127). Like the dialects of the same language (for example, Portuguese vs. Brazilian Portuguese; Dutch vs. Flemish Dutch; American vs. British



English) may have some dissimilarities in accent, grammar, and vocabulary, emotions in turn, as a universal language, could also incorporate dialects that vary subtly from each other. Humans of different cultural backgrounds can give their own categorization on a universal emotion. Conversely, humans can impose universal categories on a culture-bound reality (Russell, 1991).

Mesquita & Frijda (1994) state that general descriptions about cross-cultural universality of emotion, or about their cultural determination, are not correct. Rather, the assessment of biological or cultural determinants should stem from an analytical approach of the emotion process, identifying the determinants for distinct components (Mesquita & Frijda, 1994). In the literature, evidence exist for the universality of various aspects of emotions (Mesquita & Frijda, 1994). However, according to the same authors cultural differences exist and influence both the display and feeling rules, which could apply to emotional spontaneity and expressive display in total, as well as to the feeling and displaying of emotions in specific settings or in particular types of emotion.

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### 2.2.3. EMOTIONS IN THE FIELD OF MARKETING

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*“A brand that captures your mind gains behavior.  
A brand that captures your heart gains commitment”  
Scott Talgo, Brand Strategist*

In our everyday life, we should make both major and minor decisions. Are our decisions primarily cognitive/rational or emotional?

Traditionally, in cognitive science, decision making is perceived as a mainly rational process (Markic, 2009). Likewise, traditional marketing sees consumers (business end customers) in numerous markets (service, industrial, technology, consumer) primarily as logical decision-makers, who do mind about functional benefits and characteristics, weigh them according to their significance, trade off features by comparing them and finally choose the product with the highest overall utility, indicated as the sum of weighted features (Schmitt, 1999). In traditional marketing,



product features are perceived as key tools that supplement the product's basic function as well as differentiate a company's from its competitors' offerings (Kotler, 1994; Schmitt, 1999). Product category and competition, in the sphere of traditional marketing, are narrowly defined (Schmitt, 1999).

However, recent studies in the field of cognitive science have pointed out that human decisions and actions are much more based on intuition and emotional responses than it was previously thought (Markic, 2009). Hence, in this era of globalization, the old traditional paradigms have already been transformed and adapted into the new ones in every aspect, and so in the field of marketing. Nowadays, consumers become better informed, more knowledgeable, more sophisticated in their choices and take functional features/benefits as a given (Schmitt, 1999). What they really seek is products/ services that captivate their senses, stimulate their minds as well as touch their hearts (Schmitt, 1999).

Consumer decisions nowadays are not at all merely cognitive and rational, as it was perceived once; on the contrary, much might be emotional and elicit various kinds of feelings (Jamwal & Soodan, 2014). After all, emotions affect our daily lives, drive our behavior and most of us have made decisions based on our feelings rather than logic (Robinette, Brand & Lenz, 2001). However, consumers are both rational and emotional human beings who want to experience pleasure (Schmitt, 1999). For this reason, attention must be shifted from traditional marketing features and benefits approach to customer experiences (Schmitt, 1999). In order to capitalize on the new opportunities provided by experiential marketing, marketers need to consider new ideas, concepts, strategies and approaches in the field (Schmitt, 1999). This does not mean that marketers should perceive thinking and feeling as somehow mutually exclusive. On the contrary, emotion and logic are and should be intertwined in consumer decision making. Traditional marketing has been studied extensively in the literature. However, the same does not hold for the emotions in marketing and there is need for further research in this area.

It is widely acknowledged that emotions play a very crucial role in consumer behavior (Pandey, 2006; Jamwal & Soodan, 2014). After having recognized the important role of emotions in the marketing field, academics have placed consumers at the core of a brand's strategy, not the product, marked a necessary shift from traditional marketing





thinking and set the stage for a whole new way of thinking that connects brands with individuals in a more sensitive and humanistic way (Pandey, 2006).

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### 2.2.3.1. BRANDS & EMOTIONAL BRANDING

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Brands constitute a combination of both emotional and logical/rational elements, and thus they can be considered to have duality appealing to both the heart and the mind of consumers (Bhat & Reddy, 1998; Zambardino & Goodfellow, 2007). The functional and rational appeal can explain the very concern of consumer for its purchase (Soodan & Pandey, 2016), however, emotions elicited by brands can improve the consumption and buying processes (Hirshman & Holbrook 1982), as well as form consumers' positive attitudes (Soodan & Pandey, 2016).

According to the American Marketing Association (AMA), brand is *“a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of them, [that] is intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or a group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors”*. In other words, branding involves attaching a “label” (for identification) and “meaning” (for understanding) to a service, product, person, idea, etc (Keller, 1998). Branding is considered as a top management priority, since the academics in the marketing field have agreed that brands are one of the company's most valuable intangible assets (Keller & Lehmann, 2006). The role of brands is threefold. Firstly, brands can be seen as the “stamp” or “marker” or “identifier” for the company's offerings (Keller & Lehmann, 2006). Secondly, brands can make easier the procedure of the consumer choice by guaranteeing a particular quality level, decreasing risk, and/or creating trust (Keller & Lehmann, 2006).

In addition, brands are built on the product itself, the marketing effort that accompanies it as well as the usage (or no usage) by consumers (Keller & Lehmann, 2006). Hence brands mirror the whole experience that consumers gain with products or/and services . In addition, brands play an essential role in determining the success of the marketing activity (Keller & Lehmann, 2006). There is no doubt that brands constitute a financial asset as well. Hence brands denote their impact at three main





Levels- product, financial and customer market (Keller & Lehmann, 2006). The value created by these various benefits is frequently met as brand equity in the literature (Keller & Lehmann, 2006).

Brands deliver functional, emotional as well as self-expressive benefits (Aaker, 1996). Functional benefits are those based on a product attribute that provide functional utility to the customer. Moreover, emotional benefits add emotional richness and depth to the experience of owning and using the brand. In addition, the brand helps customers to satisfy their need for self-expression and typically strengthens their connection with the product. Consumers perceive strong brands as highly familiar and distinguished by favorable, unique and strong associations (Keller, 1998)

From the above mentioned, it is clear that brands do play a focal role in the market, but emotions can be used as a strategic initiative for making it a successful brand (Soodan & Pandey, 2016). So, does emotional branding make indeed a greater impact? Does the “usage” of emotional appeals in brands really trigger consumers to purchase/ choose the brands?

Over the past two decades, emotional branding has arisen as a highly influential brand management paradigm (Gobe, 2001; Zaltman, 2003; Thompson, Rindfleisch & Arsel, 2006; Gobe, 2010), which has stressed the importance of building strong brands by forging deep and lasting emotional attunement ties between consumers and brands (Aaker, 1996; Keller, 2003; Roberts, 2005; Thompson, Rindfleisch & Arsel, 2006; Morrison & Crane, 2007). Emotional branding experts state clearly that a traditional branding approach, which is feature/benefit-driven, cannot offer a long-lasting competitive advantage, since it is easily emulated, specifically when the benefits are merely linked to technological and product design features (Thompson, Rindfleisch & Arsel, 2006). They further claim that attribute-oriented benefits alone are unlikely to make the difference in the clutter of an (over) saturated marketing environment, where an excessive number of brands are fighting to establish unique and memorable associations in consumers’ mindsets (Thompson, Rindfleisch & Arsel, 2006). Moreover, the brand meanings, which elate passion and abide loyalty in consumers, are hardly feature oriented benefits (Mark & Pearson, 2001; Gobe, 2001; Roberts, 2005)

Emotional branding aspires to build strong and meaningful affective relationships with consumers in order to make brands a memorable and unforgettable part of their



lives, memories, and an essential association with their social networks (Atkin, 2004; Thompson, Rindfleisch & Arsel, 2006). Over the past years, numerous famous companies with strong brands, such as Apple, Tide, Starbucks, Lexus, IBM, Cheerios, Nike and McDonald's have invested in emotional branding strategies (Gobe, 2001; Atkin, 2004; Roberts, 2005; Thompson, Rindfleisch & Arsel, 2006), since more and more consumers tend to perceive brands as their relationship partners, which help them achieve their personal goals and overcome dilemmas in their daily lives (Fournier, 1998; Thompson, Rindfleisch & Arsel, 2006). Only when brands integrate into consumers' identity and lives, they can emerge emotions (Fournier, 1998; Holt, 2002; Zaltman, 2003; Brown, Kozinets & Sherry 2003; Kates, 2004; Thompson, Rindfleisch & Arsel, 2006) and prolong the comprehension of brand dynamics beyond well-known existing traditional brand concepts such as brand personality, attitude, loyalty and satisfaction (Fournier, 1994). Thus brands can be considered as an active contributing relationship partner in the brand- consumer dyad, since consumer researchers have recently attempted to humanize and anthropomorphize brands (Sweeney & Chew, 2002). More specifically, Blackston (1992, 2000) describes the brand as a human being with whom the consumer could decide to be in a relationship. Both consumer and brand have attitudes towards each other; on the one hand, consumer is active by inferring the brand personality characteristics and evolving attitudes towards it, and on the other hand, the brand is having an attitude towards its target market that constantly influences consumers' attitudes towards it (Dall'Olmo Riley & deChernatony, 2000; Sweeney & Chew, 2002). However, brands are inanimate despite the fact that they are being seen with perceived human-like traits. This means that brands "*cannot truly reciprocate on an individual basis in a relationship with a consumer*" (Sweeney & Chew, 2002: 28).

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#### 2.2.3.1.1. CONSUMER-BRAND RELATIONSHIPS

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Interpersonal relationships have stimulated and driven extensive studies on marketing relationships and consequently on consumer-brand relationships (e.g., Blackston, 1992; Fournier, 1998). Consumer-brand relationship (CBR) research encompasses various concepts and theories, stemming from diverse academic research disciplines, such as tourism, marketing, psychology, anthropology, sociology, or neuroscience and



thus it is multidisciplinary, multi-conceptual as well as multidimensional (Fetscherin & Heinrich, 2014). Recently, consumer-brand relationship (CBR) has occupied a focal position in the theory of branding (e.g., Fournier, 1998; Franzen, 1999; Aggarwal, 2004; Chang, & Chieng, 2006), as consumers tend to perceive their interpersonal relationships in a similar way with their relationships with brands (Aggarwal, 2004). Brands of all types, such as services brands, product brands and place brands can be integral to consumer's self, for example life, personal goals, identity, emotions and resources, can accrue financial as well as nonfinancial benefits that create brand equity and can form brand relationships by enabling, enticing, and enriching customers (e.g., Keller, 1993; Schouten & McAlexander, 1995; Thompson & Arsel, 2004; Muniz & Schau, 2005; Aaker, 2009; Fournier, 2010; Park, MacInnis & Eisingerich, 2016; Janiszewski & Warlop, 2017; Park & MacInnis, 2018).

Consumers seek for experiences that go well beyond a functional need fulfillment (Rozanski, Baum & Wolfson, 1999) and they “animate”, humanize or personalize the brands by giving them human characteristics and perceive them as relationship partners (e.g., Fournier, 1998; Aggarwal, 2004). A brand relationship perspective can contribute to an enhanced comprehension of the brand roles in consumers' life (Breivik & Thorbjørnsen, 2008). The richness of a brand relationship perspective gives academics the opportunity to conceptualize, operationalize and explore bonds between consumers and brands (Breivik & Thorbjørnsen, 2008).

Consumers sometimes build a very close emotional bond with brands or objects, by giving them names, talking to them, sharing their intimate experiences with them and in extreme cases even getting the brand logo tattooed on them (Aggarwal, 2004). While some may argue that consumer relationships with brands, objects or services cannot be paralleled with that of interpersonal/social relationships, there are several reasons why sometimes people interact with inanimate objects, like brands, in a similar way with other people. This happens because many times consumers interact with the people that represent the brand (e.g., employees of the company). This happens more frequently for service brands (for example banks, hotels, airlines etc). Moreover, some consumers think of the brands as living beings. McGill (1998) stated that “*people treat some brands and products as if their characteristics are produced by an underlying, defining essence, analogous to DNA or a soul, and not by human design or construction*” (as cited in Aggarwal, 2004: 5). This “humanization” of



brands can be a result of dynamic and repeated interactions between the brand and the consumer, such as direct emails, ad-messages, brand mascots and discount coupons (Aggarwal, 2004).

Individuals tend to frequently connect and engage with brands that are deemed meaningful and important in fulfilling their hedonic, psychological, utilitarian, social, spiritual or even symbolic goals (Gallup, 2011; Brodie, Hollebeek., Jurić & Ilić, 2011; Park & MacInnis, 2018), making such self-relevant brands highly prominent or salient in their memory, self and life (Belk, 1988; Huffman, Ratneshwar & Mick, 2000; Escalas & Bettman, 2005; Reimann & Aron, 2009; Park, MacInnis, Priester, Eisingerich & Iacobucci., 2010; Keller, 2012; Park & MacInnis, 2018). Consumers ought to build ties with self-relevant brands emotionally, since they evoke positive and strong emotions that connect directly to and implicate the self (Brown & Marshall, 2001; Thomson, MacInnis & Park, 2005; Park & MacInnis, 2018). Self-relevant emotions encompass love (Batra et al., 2012).

Both consumers and firms/organizations/companies benefit from consumer- brand relationships. On one hand consumers experience intrinsic benefits by building a relationship with a specific product or service brand, and on the other hand companies experience the requisite to build ties with their consumers, since firms can achieve better results in customers' satisfaction and retainment of some profitable customers (Buttle, 2010). By establishing strong consumer-brand relationships, consumers are more possibly to pay a price premium, remain loyal and engage in positive word of mouth, among others.

The consumer-brand relationships literature entails numerous CBR concepts, such as brand trust, identification, romance, commitment, connectedness, passion, emotional attachment and more recently brand love (e.g., Thomson et al., 2005; Bauer et al., 2007; Patwardhan & Balasubramanian, 2011; Batra et al., 2012; Albert & Merunka, 2013; Javed et al., 2015; Delgado-Ballester, Palazón & Pelaez-Muñoz, 2017) in order to capture the various aspects of consumer emotional connections with brands (Jiang, Potwarka & Havitz, 2017). Brand love has been suggested to be a highly inclusive concept encompassing pleasure, positive emotional connection, passion and affection, as brand emotional attachment and passion do (Patwardhan & Balasubramanian, 2011; Thomson et al., 2005; Jiang, Potwarka & Havitz, 2017), however it also includes a long-term relationship, attitude valence, and attitude strength (Batra et al.,

2012). Brand love has been proved to predict positive business outcomes (e.g., Batra et al., 2012) and its theoretical and empirical distinction from other CBR constructs have been tested and proved (e.g., Albert & Merunka, 2013; Jiang, Potwarka & Havitz, 2017).

Fetscherin and Heinrich (2014) inspired by various theories and models in the literature (Hierarchy of Effects Model by Lavidge and Steiner, 1961; the Relationship Investment Model by Rusbult, 1980; Keller's, 2001, Customer-Based Brand Equity Model; as well as theories of social exchange and interpersonal attraction) and proposed a brand connection matrix, where different brand relationship concepts were classified into relationships based on emotional connections, functional connections or a combination of both. In tourism, every second in the destination (brand) experience continuum is connected to tourist-destination relationships (analogous to CBRs), which incorporate both emotional and functional connections, as well as a mixture of both (Fetscherin & Heilmann, 2015).

Figure 2: Brand connection matrix by Fetscherin and Heinrich (2014)

		Emotional Connection (Feeling/Affective)	
		<i>Low</i>	<i>High</i>
Functional Connection (Thinking/Cognitive)	<i>High</i>	(1) “functionally invested”	(2) “fully invested”
	<i>Low</i>	(3) “un-invested”	(4) “emotionally invested”

Brand connection matrix is consisted of four quadrants that are described by Fetscherin and Heinrich (2014) as follows:

Quadrant (1): High functional but low emotionally connected consumers; they are satisfied with the brand in terms of performance, but shop around (emotionally detached). Since consumers appreciate the functionality of the brand, they are not as price sensitive as “uninvested” ones, but if they find a better deal in terms of value



proposition (price versus functionality) they may switch. In this case, consumers perceive the brand a colleague.

Quadrant (2): High functional and high emotional connected consumers; they are fully invested to brands. In this relationship, consumers “love” their brand and they are less price sensitive, they show high brand loyalty (switch less likely to other brands) and positive word of mouth, high brand or service forgiveness when failures occur, as well as high willingness to pay a price premium (Donavan et al, 2012). In this case, consumers perceive the brands as family, partners and/or part of themselves.

Quadrant (3): Low functional and low emotional connected consumers are “uninvested” to brands and conceive brands as acquaintance. They are not loyal, switch easily to other brands, since they are mostly price sensitive, and they are not willing to pay a price premium, as brands are extremely subject to the competitive environment. Those brands should either fulfill consumers’ function or emotional needs to strengthen and deepen their connection to consumers.

Quadrant (4): Low functional but high emotional connected consumers are those who are emotionally invested to brands. They prefer these brands mainly for emotional reasons, although the brands do not actually meet consumers’ needs or desires or the brands perform worse than competitor brands. These brands do not acquire all the functions or features consumers are seeking, want or need, but consumers can forgive these brand’s functional drawbacks or are willing to get less functionality because consumers’ emotional needs compensate for brand’s functional shortcomings. This “emotionally invested” relationship might be short-term and therefore brands should address these shortcomings. In this case, consumers conceive brands as a friend but this friendship can lead to a committed relationship or family (top-right quadrant), or transit to a relationship with low emotional connection, if disappointments of functional shortcomings appear with the passing of time, or the relationship will even be ended (Sussan, Hall & Meamber, 2012).

In addition, Fetscherin and Heinrich (2014) proposed also a second model of CBR, which is focused specifically on the emotional dimension of CBR. They classified the different concepts of CBR into group based on the strengths of relationships (weak versus strong) and the consumers’ feeling toward the brand (negative versus positive).

Figure 3: Brand feeling matrix by Fetscherin and Heinrich (2014)

		Strengths of Brand Relationship	
		<i>Weak</i>	<i>Strong</i>
Feeling Towards Brand	<i>Positive</i>	(1) Brand Satisfaction	(2) Brand Love Brand Passion
	<i>Negative</i>	(3) Brand Avoidance	(4) Brand Hate Brand Divorce

Brand feeling matrix is consisted of four quadrants that are described by Fetscherin and Heinrich (2014) as follows:

Quadrant (1): Consumers have a weak but yet positive feeling toward a brand. Concepts such as brand satisfaction fall into this quadrant. Numerous consumers may be satisfied with a service or product brand but this does not necessarily mean that they become loyal or love the brand.

Quadrant (2): Consumers have strong and positive emotional feelings towards brands. Concepts such as brand love (Batra et al, 2012) or brand passion (Bauer et al, 2007) fall into this quadrant.

Quadrant (3): Consumers have negative but weak feelings towards brands. Concepts such as anticonsumption or brand avoidance (Lee et al., 2009) fall into this quadrant.

Quadrant (4): Consumers have strong and negative feelings towards brands. Concepts such as brand hate (Aron & Muñiz, 2002), brand divorce (Sussan et al., 2012) and anti-branding (Krishnamurthy & Kucuk, 2009) fall into this quadrant.

Academic studies have found that brand love is a stronger concept than satisfaction and liking to predict desirable post-consumption behavior, for instance repurchase intentions, positive word-of-mouth, brand loyalty, as well as consumers' willingness to pay a price premium and forgiveness potential brand failures (e.g., Thomson et al., 2005; Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006; Bauer, Heinrich & Albrecht, 2009; Lastovicka & Sirianni, 2011; Batra, Ahuvia & Bagozzi, 2012; Heinrich, Albrecht & Bauer, 2012).





### 2.2.3.2. SERVICES MARKETING & EMOTIONS IN SERVICES

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Academics in the field of Marketing have also claimed that consumers, nowadays, do not buy merely services and products, instead they seek to purchase the “wonderful” and emotional experiences around what is being sold (Gobe, 2001; Brembeck & Ekstrom, 2004; Ratneshwar & Mick, 2005; Morrison & Crane, 2007; Gobe, 2010). This is specifically true for intangibles or services (Pine & Gilmore, 1999; O’Shaughnessy & O’ Shaughnessy, 2003; Pullman & Gross, 2004; Morrison & Crane, 2007).

In the literature, the striking majority of the studies about emotional branding is focused almost exclusively on product (tangibles) brands and not service (intangible) brands (Keller, 2003; Morrison & Crane, 2007). It is the intimate nature of services which makes emotions a crucial determinant in selection and consumption behavior of consumers (Morrison & Crane, 2007).

Consumer-brand relationships can be particularly applied in services context, since services are most of the times produced and consumed simultaneously. This means that consumers usually interact with service providers (service employees/staff or service organization or both), which gives them the room to create interpersonal relationships (Lovelock, 2001; Lovelock & Wright, 2001). Moreover, consumer services usually entail multiple service encounters requiring an ongoing relationship and membership with the consumer (e.g. auto repair, travel agent, travel insurance, banking and so on) (Lovelock, 2001). In addition, services are intangible and thus entail a higher perceived risk compared to goods (Zeithaml, 1981). This risk can be reduced through consumers- service provider relationships (Benapudi & Berry, 1997). Experiences from services are more personally involving than products and result in the creation of emotions with or without the attempt of service provider to manage the emotional experience of customer (Morrison & Crane, 2007). After all, services are experiential in nature and the service consumption per se can be viewed as the core output of service organizations (Bitner, 1990). Experiential marketing still remains a buzz notion in the literature (Bigne & Andreu, 2004). Consumers nowadays are no longer merely utilitarian focused, instead they are seeking for emotions and experiences as well. Despite the apparent significance of the emotions consumers feel





during their service delivery, service providers still overlook them (Barsky & Nash, 2002). The comprehension of how consumers experience emotions in the service process, as well as the different ways in which these influence and contribute to essential constructs of marketing, such as satisfaction, loyalty and willingness to pay, gives rise to a number of implications for the services design and delivery (Bigne & Andreu, 2004).

In the services literature, academics have identified the affective state of consumers during the service consumption as a major catalyst to the service experience (Oliver, 1993; Knowles, Grove & Pickett, 1993; Liljander & Strandvik, 1997; Wirtz & Bateson, 1999; Bloemer & de Ruyter, 1999). Affect conceptually differs from the outcome of a cognitive evaluation process (Bloemer & de Ruyter, 1999). Affect does constitute a source of motivation for consumers, but also it plays a pivotal role in consumer information processing and consumer choice (Bloemer & de Ruyter, 1999). Even though academics have stressed the importance of the emotions in services (Knowles et al., 1999; Brown & Kirmani, 1999), there is still a lack of empirical evidence of their role in the field (Wong, 2004).

#### 2.2.4. EMOTIONS IN TOURISM

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In tourism context, the role of emotions has received a lot of attention since they formulate experiences, which often entail positive emotions that can be characterized as pleasurable and satisfying ones (Aho, 2001; McIntosh & Siggs, 2005) and have a pervasive influence on tourists' reactions (Prayag, Hosany & Odeh, 2013). Emotions play a focal role in all stages of travel, as they influence tourist motivation (Gnoth, 1997; Goossens, 2000), and tourists' decisions to buy tourism and leisure services (Gnoth, 1997; Goossens, 2000; Chuang, 2007; Kwornik & Ross, 2007) at the pre-travel stage. During and after the travel, emotions have a great impact on global evaluative tourism measures, such as satisfaction (e.g., Ladhari, 2007; De Rojas & Camarero, 2008; del Bosque & San Martin, 2008; Faullant, Matzler & Mooradian, 2011) and behavioral intentions (Zeelenberg & Pieters, 2004; Bigné et al., 2005; Yuksel & Yuksel, 2007). Goossens (2000) supports that emotion influences tourist

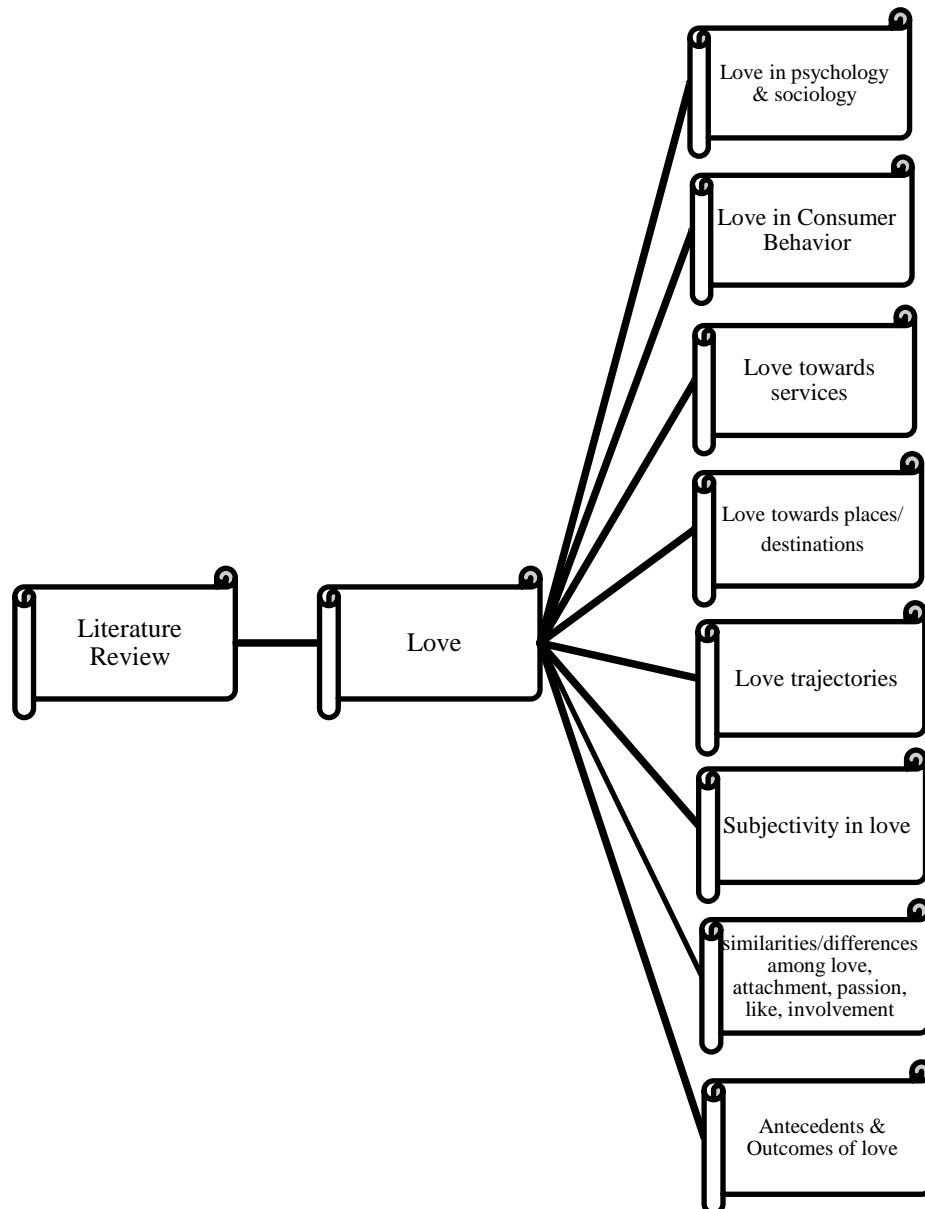


destination choice. Despite the unprecedented recognition of the fundamental role of emotion in tourism, there are few empirical studies, which investigate tourists' emotional connections or meanings attached to destinations they visit (e.g., Yuksel, Yuksel, & Bilim, 2010; Hosany & Prayag, 2013).



# CHAPTER THREE: LITERATURE REVIEW ON LOVE

## PREVIEW OF CHAPTER THREE





This chapter provides an overview of previous research on love across various disciplines. It also provides the sources upon which the main research goals were stemmed, explains the facets of love, and analyzes the differences between love and concepts that sometimes are used interchangeably by researchers (e.g., attachment, passion). The main objective of the literature review on love was mainly to gain insights on previous academic studies on love across different academic fields (e.g., psychology, sociology, marketing and tourism) that subsequently formed an essential part of the emergent research design process and set the basis for primary data collection procedures and requirements.

*“Consumers do fall[. . .] truly, madly, deeply in love with products and services. They have to have them; they are passionate about them; they get a quasi-erotic charge from examining, exhibiting and expending money on them”.*

*Brown (1998: 794)*

Human beings are emotional creatures (Robinette, Brand & Lenz, 2001). Emotions affect our daily lives and most of us have made decisions based on our feelings rather than logic (Robinette, Brand & Lenz, 2001). The most complex of all emotions is, probably, love (Loureiro & Kaufmann, 2012). According to Albert et al. (2008), various sciences have explored the complex construct of love, such as sociology (through observable manifestations like marriages), psychology (as a psychological state) and lately marketing (as brand love) and tourism marketing (as destination brand love).

*“Love is an outcome of a bi-directional interaction between two partners, yet its highly dynamic interactivity makes it challenging for researchers to study”* (Whang et al., 2004: 320). Even though there is no universally accepted definition of love (Whang et al., 2004), in the field of psychology, love is defined as *“the constellation of behaviors, cognitions and emotions associated with the desire to enter or maintain a close relationship with a specific other person”* (Aron et al., 1991: 26).

However, the love feeling is not only romantic/passionate, but it may also be manifested in many other types of relationships such as family and friendship (Albert



et al., 2008), and thus it can be companionate as well as affectionate (Batra et al., 2012; 2013).

In psychology, it is claimed that “*falling in love is something that happens to us, not something we make happen*” (Walsh, 1991:186), implying that marketers cannot influence consumers to fall romantically in love with products (Whang et al., 2004). But, how many times have we caught ourselves or people around us claiming that we/they are in love with a brand or product? What do we really mean by saying we are “in love” with a brand or product? Since love is a result of a bi-directional interaction between two persons, can it exist in consumer- product or consumer-service context? Do consumers actually find themselves in a romantic and even companionate product relationship that resembles a love relationship with another person? According to Whang et al (2004), although love for a product/ brand is certainly unidirectional and less dynamic, it can exist in consumer-product relationship, since love is not limited to another human being. Many academics have investigated the relationship between consumers and products or brands (i.e., Fournier, 1998; Muñiz & Schau, 2005; Schouten & McAlexander, 1995; Keller & Lehmann, 2006), using concepts such as brand sensitivity (Kapferer & Laurent, 1988), brand satisfaction (Bloemer & Lemmink, 1992; Higgins, 1997), brand loyalty (Tucker, 1964; Jacoby & Kyner, 1973; Jacoby & Chesnut, 1978; Baldinger & Rubinson, 1996; Fournier & Yao, 1997; Dekimpe, Steenkamp, Mellens & Abeele, 1997; Oliver, 1999; Odin, Odin & Valette-Florence, 2001; Sahin et al., 2011), brand attachment (e.g., Thomson et al., 2005; Swaminathan, Stilley & Ahluwalia, 2009; Park, MacInnis, & Priester, 2006; Park et al., 2010), brand commitment (e.g., Traylor, 1981, 1984; Beatty & Kahle, 1988; Samuelsen & Sandvik, 1998; Warrington & Shim, 2000; Wang, 2002; Coulter, Price & Feick, 2003; Fullerton, 2005; Burmann & Zeplin, 2005), brand trust (e.g., Hess, 1995; Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001; Delgado-Ballester & Munuera-Aleman, 2001, 2003; Delgado-Ballester, 2004), brand identification (e.g., Escalas & Bettman, 2003) and more recently brand love (e.g., Ahuvia, 1993, 2005a, 2005b; Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006; Kamat & Parulekar, 2007; Keh et al., 2007; Sarkar, 2011, 2013; Sarkar, Ponnam & Murthy, 2012; Batra, Ahuvia & Bagozzi, 2011; Loureiro & Kaufmann, 2012; Roy et al., 2013; Langner et al., 2016; Hegner et al., 2017; Bairrada, Coelho & Coelho, 2018), to distinguish among different types and intensities of relationships (Albert et al., 2008). Among the consumer-brand



relationships studied, the concept of brand love is the least researched (Fournier, 1998; Ahuvia, 2005a; Albert et al., 2008).

In the literature, it is widely acknowledged that a brand is a powerful means of differentiation, and in turn, differentiation constitutes a crucial competitive marketing strategy (Kotler, 1988; Kapferer, 1997; Keller, 2003; Pappu, Quester, & Cooksey, 2005; Tasci, Gartner, & Cavusgil, 2007; Boo, Busser & Baloglu, 2009). In the field of tourism, branding offers implications for travel destination management (Ritchie & Ritchie, 1998; Buhalis, 2000; d’Hauteserre, 2001; Williams, Gill, & Chura, 2004; Konecnik & Gartner, 2007; Woodside, Cruickshank, & Dehuang, 2007; Boo, Busser & Baloglu, 2009). Destination branding is regarded a vital aspect of current destination management practice (Boo, Busser & Baloglu, 2009), as brands are found in many categories of tourism goods/services and permeate almost all facets of tourism activities (Cai, 2002). Furthermore, the complex and unique destination characteristics present a challenge to branding (Murphy, Pritchard, & Smith, 2000; Gnoth, 2002; Cai, 2002; Dredge & Jenkins, 2003; Boo, Busser & Baloglu, 2009). However, the question remains as to whether it is possible to transfer already established and entrenched branding principles to destinations (Konecnik & Gartner, 2007). According to the de Chernatony and Dall’Olmo Riley (1999), the brand concept is similar for both products and services, even though different branding strategy dimensions might be emphasized. Thus destination characteristics should be explored before applying branding principles (Konecnik & Gartner, 2007). Despite the great importance of branding within tourism destinations, there have been few systematic studies in the literature (Hankinson, 2005; Konecnik & Gartner, 2007), and while recent studies documented in marketing journals have investigated usefulness and applications of brand love, studies on destination love and its relations to other constructs are still lacking.

The psychological dimensions of experiencing a place have been studied under various concepts in the literature, such as place identity (e.g., Williams & Patterson, 1999; Stedman, 2002; Hinds & Sparks, 2008; Prayag & Ryan, 2012), sense of place (e.g., Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001), place affect (e.g., Kals, Shumaker, & Montada, 1999; Hinds & Sparks, 2008), place social bonding (e.g., Hammitt, Backlund, & Bixler, 2006; Ramkissoon et al., 2012), topophilia (e.g., Tuan, 1974), place dependence (e.g., Stokols & Shumaker, 1981; Bricker & Kerstetter, 2000;



Prayag & Ryan, 2012), community sentiment (Hummon, 1992), sense of community (e.g., McMillan & Chavis, 1986), community identity (e.g., Puddifoot, 1995), place identification (e.g., Twigger-Ross & Uzzell, 1996; Droseltis & Vignoles, 2010) and place attachment (e.g., Hummon, 1992; Low & Altman, 1992; Moore & Graefe, 1994; Mesch & Manor, 1998; Bricker & Kerstetter, 2000; Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001; Vaske & Kobrin, 2001; Hidalgo & Hernández, 2001; Uzzell et al., 2002; Kyle, Absher, & Graefe, 2003; Mazumdar & Mazumdar, 2004; Hou, Lin & Morais, 2005; Hwang, Lee, & Chen, 2005; Hernández, Hidalgo, Salazar-Laplace & Hess, 2007; Gross & Brown, 2008; Raymond, Brown & Weber, 2010; Yuksel, Yuksel & Bilim, 2010; Halpenny, 2010; Scannell & Gifford, 2010; Devine-Wright & Howes, 2010; Gosling & Williams, 2010; Morgan, 2010; Scannell & Gifford, 2010a; Rollero & De Piccoli, 2010; Hernández, Martin, Ruiz, & Hidalgo, 2010; Raymond et al., 2011; Raymond, Brown, & Robinson, 2011; Lewicka, 2011; Ramkissoon et al., 2012; Ramkissoon et al., 2013; Scannell & Gifford, 2017; Buonincontri, Marasco & Ramkissoon, 2017; Dwyer, Chen & Lee, 2019; Isa, Ariyanto & Kiumarsi, 2019; Patwardhan, Ribeiro, Payini, Woosnam, Mallya & Gopalakrishnan, 2020). However, the concept of place/destination love in today's literature is still missing. This constitutes a significant gap in the literature, since tourist destinations must be seen as brands that have to be managed from a strategic point of view (Beerli & Martin, 2004) and the increasing importance of loved brands in marketing practice necessitates the theoretical development as well as the empirical measurement of destination/ place love.

*So, what is destination love and how do individuals explain “fall in love” with particular destinations/ places, even seeing these destinations as “part of themselves”?*

In the last decades, numerous academics and practitioners have recognized the importance of studying the consumer-brand relationships (Ismail & Spinelli, 2012). Emotions have been proved to play a crucial role in the propensity to continue a consumer-brand relationship (Nobre, 2011; Drennan Bianchi, Cacho-Elizondo, Louriero, Guibert & Proud, 2015; Kudeshia, Sikdar & Mittal, 2016), even when conflicts appear in these relationships (Pawle & Cooper, 2006). Moreover, recently it is witnessed in the marketing literature an unprecedented research interest on the emotion of love (Ismail & Spinelli, 2012). Nowadays, love expressions towards



objects and brands, such as “I love Coca Cola!”, are frequently used by consumers worldwide (Ahuvia, 2005).

Even though love phrases are perceived to be used by people more superficially when referring to products than when referring to other people, recent studies have found that consumers are able to experience love towards brands or objects and therefore the concept of love should be a main objective for brand management or customer relationship marketing (e.g., Ahuvia, 1993, 2005; Roberts, 2005; Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006; Pang et al., 2009; Bergkvist & Bech-Larsen, 2010; Batra et al., 2012; Roy, Eshghi & Sarkar, 2012; Kohli, Melewar & Yen, 2014; Obal, Krey & Bushardt, 2015; Vernuccio, Pagani, Barbarossa & Pastore, 2015; Kaufmann, Loureiro & Manarioti, 2016; Schlobohm, Zulauf & Wagner, 2016; Hegner et al., 2017).

Apart from the emotion of love, the concept of love can be examined as a relationship, attitude, experience and so on (Fehr & Russell, 1991). Several academic studies on non-interpersonal love, such as brand love, have their roots on the theories of interpersonal love and relationships found in psychology and sociology and demonstrate that the dimensional structure of a consumer’s love relationship with a brand is conceptually analogous to that of interpersonal love and attachment (e.g., Shimp & Madden, 1988; Whang et al., 2004; Albert & Valette- Florence, 2010; Sarkar, 2011; Sarkar, Ponnampalani & Murthy, 2012). Therefore it is crucial to review interpersonal love theory in order to understand consumer-brand love relationships.

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### 3.1. THE CONCEPT OF LOVE IN PSYCHOLOGY AND SOCIOLOGY

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Love can be perceived a social relationship or /and an emotional state. For instance, when individuals talk about their lovers, they refer to the love relationship between them, whereas when people talk about their love feelings, love is perceived an emotion and it is comprehended as “*a process or a momentary state that can also change over time and take on different forms*” (Lazarus, 1991; as cited in Heinrich et al., 2012: 138). Academics in the field of psychology and sociology have tried for many decades to find a clear-cut way to understand the complex concept of love (Taraban & Hendrick, 1995). Several theories, dimensions and types of love have





been offered throughout the years. Interpersonal love is a multidimensional phenomenon, including a wide variety of cognitions, emotions, as well as actions. Interpersonal love encompasses extremely positive emotional valence (Richins, 1997; Plutchik, 2000), strong physiological arousal (Hatfield & Walster, 1978; Hatfield & Sprecher, 1986) and phenomena like separation anxiety and exclusivity (Bowlby, 1979).

In very early theories, love was conceptualized as a global concept or one-dimensional entity (e.g., Spearman, 1927), but later love was decomposed in several underlying bonds of interrelated feelings, denoting its multidimensionality that yielded in greater knowledge of the concept (Thurstone, 1938; Thomson, 1939; Lee, 1977; Hendrick & Hendrick, 1986, 1989; Sternberg, 1986, 1997). The majority of the academics in the field support that the positive emotion of love is not a single one and that different people experience different styles of love and in a different way.

Different academics have proposed various features of love such as: erogenous stimulation (Watson, 1924), frustrated desire (Freud, 1922/1951), rewarding interactions (Centers, 1975), as well as acts that lead to reproductive success (Buss, 1988). Furthermore, several academics have identified different love styles, for example romantic or passionate love, companionate love, secure love, caregiver love etc (Lee, 1977; Sternberg, 1986; Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Hatfield & Rapson, 1993; Taraban & Hendrick, 1995 ; Jenkins & Oatley, 1996). Lee (1977) has proposed a typology of love including in total six styles: three primary, which include Eros (romantic-passionate love), Ludus (game-playing love), Storge (friendship love; slowly developing affection and companionship;), and three secondary, which include Pragma (logical, “shopping list” love; a practical style of love encompassing conscious consideration of the demographics of the loved one), Mania (possessive, dependent love; includes obsession, jealousy, and great emotional intensity) and Agape (all-giving, selfless love; altruistic love in which the lover views it as his or her duty to love without expectation of reciprocation).



Table 3: Lee's (1977) Love Attitude styles

Style	Definition	Description
<b>Eros</b>	<i>Romantic-Passionate Love</i>	The search for a beloved whose psychical presentation of self-love embodies an image already held in the mind of the lover.
<b>Ludus</b>	<i>Game-Playing Love</i>	Playful or game love. Permissive and pluralistic. The degree of 'involvement' is carefully controlled, jealousy is eschewed, and relationships are often multiple and relatively short-lived.
<b>Storge</b>	<i>Friendship love</i>	Based on slowly developing affection and companionship, a gradual disclosure of self, an avoidance of self-conscious passion, and an expectation of long-term commitment.
<b>Mania</b>	<i>Possessive-Dependent Love</i>	An obsessive, jealous, emotionally intense love style characterized by preoccupation with the beloved and a need for repeated reassurance of being loved.
<b>Agape</b>	<i>All giving, Selfless love</i>	Altruistic love, given because the lover sees it as his duty to love without expectation of reciprocity. Gentle, caring, and guided by reason more than emotion.
<b>Pragma</b>	<i>Logical, "shopping list" Love</i>	Conscious consideration of 'vital statistics' about a suitable beloved. Education, vocation, religion, age, and numerous other demographic characteristics of the potential beloved are taken into account in the search for a compatible match.

Taken from Lee 1977; Hendrick and Hendrick 1986; as cited in Whang et al., 2004

Freud (1922) explained the love emotion in terms of striving for an ego ideal and Reik (1944) in terms of a salvation search. Maslow (1955, 1962) described that Deficiency love (D-love) is based on need-fulfillment and dependence. D-love tends to be selfish and possessive, since it involves taking rather than giving, and thus can include the properties that Freud and Reik suggested, but there is also a higher form of love,



Being love (B-love), which is based on a growth need (rather than on deficiency) as well as on autonomy and giving of oneself to the other, tends to be unselfish, ecstatic and *“is possible for people who are self-actualized and could love others for themselves rather than to remedy their own deficiencies”* (Sternberg, 1996:313-314). According to Sternberg (1986) “D-love” is closest to his “infatuated love”, whereas “B-love” is closest to his “consummate love”.

Fromm (1956) suggested 5 types of love and more specifically (1) motherly, (2) brotherly, (3) erotic, (4) self-love, and (5) love of God. Kemper (1978), described love based on whether each individual is high or low in power and status. He found seven types of love: (1) brotherly, (2) romantic, (3) charismatic or discipleship love, (4) infidelity, infatuation, adulation by fans, and (5) parent-infant love.

Blau (1964) offered an exchange theory of love, which described the development of love *“as requiring a finely balanced degree of mutuality and the consistent exchange of rewards between partners”* (as cited in Hendrick & Hendrick, 1986: 392).

Rubin (1970) identified three components of romantic love: (1) affiliative and dependent need (attachment), or the desire to be close to someone; (2) predisposition to help (caring), or love manifested by helping behavior and putting another’s needs before one’s own ; and (3) exclusiveness and absorption (intimacy, inclusion of the other) , or feelings of possessiveness and union with one’s partner. Rubin (1973) aimed primarily in distinguishing love and like. He defined love as *“an attitude held by a person toward a particular other person, involving predispositions to think, feel, and behave in certain ways toward that other person”* (p. 265).

Steck, Levitan, McLane, and Kelley (1982) proposed three components of love based on Rubin's (1970) love scale: need, care, and trust/tolerance. They found that care is more indicative of love; need is more indicative of attraction; and trust is more indicative of friendship. Patterns with high care entailed the most substantial evidence for love, followed by those of high need and lastly those of high trust. Adapting these love components to Kelley’s (1979) theory of interdependence, it can be assumed that the component of care reflects a more self-sacrificial attitude, which means that a person is considering of his/her partner’s outcomes rather than his/her own outcomes. Steck et al. (1982) support that the component of care is the most central to love. People who love their partners show such love through caring behavior by exhibiting altruistic tendencies. Altruistic love tendencies are also evident, apart from the “care”



component of love (Steck et al., 1982), in the Agapic style of love (Hendrick & Hendrick, 1986), as well as in the “caregiving” behavioral system of attachment theory (Shaver & Hazan, 1988). On the other hand, the component of need reflects a more egocentric orientation in love and it is focused on self-interest rather than the partner’s welfare.

Berscheid and Walster (1978) proposed a model for passionate love, which emphasized the need aspects of love, such as feelings of exclusiveness and dependency. The other aspects of love (care, trust, and tolerance) were not significant parts in the passionate model of love.

According to Walster, Hatfield and Walster (1978) there are two general kinds of love: passionate and companionate love, with the former almost always evolving to the latter in an long lasting close relationship. Hatfield (1984, 1988) differentiated passionate and companionate love, as well. Passionate love is also met in the literature as obsessive love, or “being in love”, and constitutes an intense emotion (Christou, 2018). Reciprocated love (union with the other) is linked with fulfillment and ecstasy, whereas unrequited love (separation) is linked with emptiness, anxiety or despair (Christou, 2018). Companionate love, also known as true love, is a way less intense emotion that incorporates feelings of deep attachment, commitment and intimacy (Christou, 2018). Hatfield and Rapson (1993a; b) argue that love relationships can encompass both passionate and companionate love.

Davis (1986) has proposed three components of love: physical attraction, caring, and liking. Kelley (1983) offered a model of “pragmatic love”, which highlights trust and tolerance features of love and builds up with greater deliberation and self-control than do other types of love. According to Kelley (1983: 283) pragmatic love “*is the type of love that occurs between mature adults and is common in lengthy relationships, such as marriage*”. Pragmatic love of Kelley (1983) can be compared with conjugal love of Driscoll, Davis, and Lipitz (1972). Pragmatic love relationship involves the formation of mutual trust and tolerance of one another’s faults. Apart from pragmatic love, Kelley (1983) also recognized passionate love and altruistic love. Passionate love (need-related features) is based on the passionate love model of Berscheid and Walster (1978) and is described as an intense state of arousal. Altruistic love is described as a sacrificial love epitomized by “mother love”, of which reciprocity does



not constitute an essential part. Altruistic love emphasizes the “care” component of Rubin’s (1970) love scale.

Sternberg & Grajek (1984) claimed that interpersonal love includes a large number of affective, conative and motivational bonds. Hendrick and Hendrick (1989) proposed that passion and closeness constitute the most dominant elements of love and stated that “*love in an inclusive sense cannot be defined by any single characteristic*” (Hendrick & Hendrick, 1989: 792).

Skolnick (1978) explained love as “*a constructed experience built with feelings, ideas, and cultural symbols*” (p. 104). Furthermore, Swensen (1972) studied love by focusing on behaviors such as shared activities, disclosing intimacies etc.

Sternberg (1986) has proposed a triangular theory of love in which the complex emotion of love between two persons is made up by three components; (1) *intimacy*, which is largely derived from emotion and is characterized by Heinrich et al. (2012) as the “warm” component and refers to the feelings of closeness, connectedness, and bondedness in loving relationships, as well as being happy together and being able to rely on the partner. Intimacy is described by the level of information flow between partners, strong favorable attitude towards each other, strong positive or warm feelings, feeling of closeness, regard, liking, perception of affection and care (Shimp & Madden, 1988; Clark & Reis, 1988; Reis & Shaver, 1988; Reis & Patrick, 1996; Baumeister & Bratslavsky, 1999; Keh et al., 2007; Sarkar et al., 2012); (2) *passion*, which is primarily stemmed from the motivational involvement between two partners and gives rise to different forms of arousal (Sarkar et al, 2012). It is also characterized by Heinrich et al. (2012) as the “hot” component and refers to the drives that lead to romance, physical attraction, sexual consummation/arousal, and needs such as self-esteem, nurturance, or self-actualization (Albert et al., 2008). Passion is conceptually distinct from intimacy, because it is predominantly derived from motivation, rather than emotion or affect, but passion and intimacy are positively correlated (Hatfield & Walster, 1978; Stenberg, 1986, 1997; Hendrick & Hendrick, 1989; Baumeister & Bratslavsky, 1999; Sarkar et al., 2012). Passion is caused by the changes in the level of intimacy (Baumeister & Bratslavsky, 1999) and leads to physiological and psychological arousal (Sternberg, 1986). Arousal seeking tendency constitutes a personality characteristic that differs across individuals (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974; Sarkar et al., 2012); and (3) *decision/commitment*, which is mostly derived from



cognition and it is characterized by Heinrich et al. (2012) as the “cold” component. More specifically, decision refers to the short-term decision that one partner loves a certain other partner, and commitment refers to the willingness of the partners to sustain an long-term loving relationship. In addition, commitment shows the stability of relationship adherence over time and refers to an action or event that creates causal conditions favoring stable membership (Kelley, 1983). Commitment is “*pledging or binding of the individual to behavioral acts*” (Kiesler, 1971: 30).

Sternberg (1988) came up with eight different types of love, by using various combinations of the three main love components. Sternberg also claimed that it is not necessary all three components to be present in order to for love to exist. Various types of love exist relying on the presence or absence of the three different components. However, consummate/ complete love occurs when all three components are present.

Table 4: Sternberg’s (1986) Love Typology

Type of love	Intimacy	Passion	Decision/Commitment
Nonlove	x	x	x
Liking	✓	x	x
Infatuated love	x	✓	x
Empty love	x	x	✓
Romantic love	✓	✓	x
Companionate love	✓	x	✓
Fatuous love	x	✓	✓
Consummate/Complete love	✓	✓	✓

Source: Sternberg (1986).

Note: (✓) shows the presence of the respective component and (x) shows the absence of the respective component.

The eight types of love are the following: *Nonlove*; in this state all three components are absent. *Consummate* love; in this state all three components are there. *Liking*; in this state only the component of intimacy exists. *Infatuated love*; in this state only the



“hot” component/ passion exists. *Empty love*; in this state only the “cold” component/ commitment exists. On the other hand, *romantic love* is the combination of the “hot” (passion) and “warm” component (intimacy), *companionate* love is the combination of the “warm” component (intimacy) and the “cold” component (commitment/decision) and finally *fatuous* love stems from the “hot” component (passion) and the “cold” one (commitment/decision).

Sternberg’s (1986) triangular theory has been well acknowledged and accepted by many academics primarily in psychology and sociology fields but also in marketing field because of its robustness and high generalizability. Later, Sternberg (1997) validated his scales to measure love components taking into account various types of love relationships (like, love for parents, siblings, a friend of the same sex, a lover/spouse and any ideal lover) rather than focusing exclusively on heterosexual marital love (Sarkar et al., 2012).

Aron and Aron (1986) have stated that the emotions, cognitions, and behaviors of love can be understood in terms of a fundamental motivation to broaden one self.

Shaver, Schwartz, Kirson, and O'Connor (1987) found three clusters of love: the first love cluster is affection, which is consisted of affection, adoration, liking, love, fondness, attraction, caring, sentimentality, tenderness and compassion. This love cluster resembles Hatfield and Walster’s view of companionate love (Fehr & Russell, 1991). Second love cluster is lust, which is consisted of desire, arousal, lust, passion, and infatuation and resembles passionate love (Fehr & Russell, 1991) and the third love cluster is longing, which is consisted only of the word longing.

Hazan and Shaver (1987), as well as Shaver, Hazan and Bradshaw (1988) suggested that the attachment behaviors in adult romantic relationships depend on part upon the attachment behaviors he or she formed vis-a-vis his or her mother in infancy. Such attachment styles can be either secure (lovers who are described as cheerful, trusting and amicable and accepting and endorsing of their mates albeit flaws. Moreover, their relationships tend to last longer than the other two attachment styles), anxious-ambivalent (lovers who are described their relationship as an experience full of obsession, emotional excess, jealousy, acute sexual attraction and desire for retribution and affinity) , or avoidant (lovers that are doubtful as to whether romantic love truly exists in reality, felt that if it does, it rarely endures and that it is unlikely to find someone to truly fall in love with. They find it easy to fall in love and usually





find themselves starting to fall. Like avoidant lovers, however, they seldom find their so-called real love. They also believe, like secure lovers, that romantic feelings fluctuate in a relationship) and are mirrored, to some extent, in ways of loving as an grown-up.

Fehr and Russell (1991) propose a love typology entailing self-love, love of work, romantic love, affection, maternal love and infatuation. Jeffries (1993) builds a scale labeled “virtue”, which could best be compared to the Agapic model of love and it is focused on the intention to benefit the welfare of the partner. “Virtue” conceptualization entails following characteristics (1) Charity (doing good for the other), (2) Prudence (using reason to attain the good), (3) Justice (fulfilling basic responsibilities and obligations) (4) Fortitude (willingness to sacrifice for the other), and (5) Temperance (moderation and discipline) (as cited in Diana, 1995: 22).

According to Aron and Westbay (1996) love includes passion, intimacy and commitment. In addition, Yela (2006) argues that, in the field of psychology, the most frequently cited dimensions of love are the following: passion, attachment, intimacy and caring (for a partner).

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### 3.2. THE CONCEPT OF LOVE IN CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

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*“The origin of our desire to love lies in our profound need to value, to find things in the world which we can care about, can feel excited and inspired by.*

*It is our values that tie us to the world and that motivate us to go on living.*

*Every action is taken for the purpose of gaining or protecting something we believe will benefit our life or enhance our experience”*

*Branden (1980: 67).*

Based on Branden’s view, love is not restricted to another person (Whang et al., 2004), rather it can be found and directed towards objects, products, brands, services, places and so on. Consumers can develop emotional bonds with certain consumption objects like brands, similar to that bonds of interpersonal relationships (Fournier, 1998). However, consumers build an intense emotional connection only for a very restricted amount of brands and products (Thomson et al., 2005). These strong affective bonds constitute a crucial basis for long-term and intimate interpersonal as





well as consumer-brand relationships (Belk, 1988; Fournier, 1998). Furthermore, just as in interpersonal relationships, the strongest, most intense and complex emotion one may experience for a brand is that of brand love (Rubin, 1970; Shimp & Madden, 1988; Loureiro & Kaufmann, 2012; Huber et al., 2015).

### 3.2.1. LOVE TOWARDS OBJECTS

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Every kind of relationship is not fixed but changeable (Shimp & Madden, 1988). While consumer behavior studies mainly perceive attachment as the degree of emotional connection between consumers and objects (Dwayne Ball & Tasaki, 1992; Thomson, MacInnis & Park, 2005), the origin of a prominent emotion behind such attachments towards consumption objects is widely overlooked, namely love (Lastovicka & Sirianni, 2011). *“Love is not a homogeneous monolith with one form”* (Lastovicka & Sirianni, 2011: 2). Rather, it is a genus of various taxonomies (Lastovicka & Sirianni, 2011). According to Lastovicka and Sirianni (2011) when it comes to consumer research, the majority of love studies perceive the concept of love as a sole monolith like the study of Carroll and Ahuvia (2006). However, some academics in the field suggested particular forms of love such as agape (Belk & Coon, 1993) and philia (Fournier, 1998).

Love, originally and naturally, entails a bi-directional relationship between two human beings (Shimp & Madden, 1988; Whang et al., 2004). The relationship between consumers and objects, on the other hand, is mainly unidirectional, since the consumer can develop emotions for a consumption object, but the object itself cannot activate the relationship nor love back (Shimp & Madden, 1988). Some readers might be skeptical as it concerns the concept of love between consumers and objects and may question its applicability in the marketing context, since some could argue that when consumers state “I love \_\_\_\_\_,” they simply use the term of love in a loose way, whether it is a sport, beer, smartphone, car, perfume and so on (Ahuvia, Batra & Bagozzi, 2008). This skepticism towards consumer-objects love could be partially stemmed from the perception that love is sacred, and that by applying love to objects as common as shoes and smartphones, we degrade and depreciate love’s character (Adelman & Ahuvia, 1993). Thus, non-interpersonal love that entails a high moral,



ethical or spiritual quality, such as love of God or country, hardly invoke the same skepticism as love of Apple, Toyota or Gucci (Ahuvia, Batra & Bagozzi, 2008). Of course all types of love are not identical. For example, within romantic relationships various types of love can be manifested (Lee, 1988), so it would be not wise to equate someone's love for his hobby with his love for his wife or a loved one (Ahuvia, Batra & Bagozzi, 2008). Empirical evidence suggests that love concept is broad enough to be applied to people, ideas, activities, and objects as well as to cover many of the basic dynamics of consumer-object love relationships (Ahuvia, 1993; Ahuvia, Batra & Bagozzi, 2008). Thus, consumer-object relationships differ qualitatively from interpersonal relationships, but there are enough similarities to allow substantial analogies (Shimp & Madden, 1988).

Ortiz and Harrison (2011) state that, in retailing, the consumer-retailer relationship can be perceived as bidirectional, since *“the retailer can initiate the relationship and, in a sense, return a consumer's love”* (p. 69). Brinberg and Wood (1983) describe love as a concept, which includes affectionate regard, warmth, or comfort and is seen as highly particularistic, since its value is tightly linked to a specific individual. Shimp and Madden (1988) proposed a new way of looking at consumer-objects relationship by suggesting a conceptual model based analogously on Sternberg's (1986) triangular theory of love, which uses a triangle metaphor to conceptualize the interrelationships among three pivotal components of love namely intimacy, passion, and decision/commitment. According to Shimp & Madden (1988), these three love components become liking, yearning, and decision/commitment in a consumption context and thus constitute a fundamental basis for understanding the nature of a consumer-object relationship. Liking corresponds to intimacy, yearning to passion and to decision/commitment components of interpersonal love relationship as explained by Sternberg (1986). More specifically, liking refers to the intimate brand feelings, yearning refers to the brand passion, which takes the form of different types of arousal, decision refers to the individual's recognition of the brand liking and yearning temporary and commitment refers to the individual's long-term repeat purchase of the same brand in future. The presence of all these three components contributes greatly to object loyalty (Albert et al., 2008), that is perceived the equivalent of Sternberg's complete love (Schlobohm, Zulauf & Wagner, 2016).



Shimp and Madden, however, do not evaluate empirically the validity of their construct (Albert et al., 2008).

Table 5: Shimp and Madden’s (1988) Typology of Consumer-Brand Relationship

<b>Kinds of Relation</b>	<b>Liking</b>	<b>Yearning</b>	<b>Decision/Commitment</b>
Nonliking	x	x	X
Liking	✓	x	X
Infatuation	x	✓	X
Functionalism	x	x	✓
Inhibited Desire	✓	✓	X
Utilitarianism	✓	x	✓
Succumbed Desire	x	✓	✓
Loyalty	✓	✓	✓

Source: Shimp and Madden (1988)

Note: (✓) denotes the presence of the respective component and (x) denotes the absence of the respective component

Each row of Table 5 perfectly corresponds to the respective row of the Table 4 according to the Shimp and Madden’s (1988) explanations. For example, inhibited brand desire corresponds to Sternberg’s (1986) romantic love conceptualization. Liking (or intimacy) as well as yearning (or passion) are present, whereas decision/commitment is absent. This is possible to happen because of several external constraints like family/peer pressure, low income etc. and thus the consumer might not be committed to a brand in terms of repeat buying, even though he/she may have developed brand intimacy and passion (Sarkar, 2011, Sarkar et al., 2012).

Belk and Coon (1993) see gift giving as a form of love and more specifically as an agapic love. Agapic love in the context of gift giving is described as expressiveness of feeling, passionate emotion, specialness and singularity, as well as selfless sacrifice.

After some years, Ahuvia (1993, 2005a, 2005b) initiated empirical research for consumer-objects love and advocated this concept by suggesting a conditional integration of the love theory stemming from the study of Aron and Aron (1986). Ahuvia (1993) suggested that a consumer could develop intense emotional



attachments to some “love objects” (anything other than another person) when the level of integration and desire for that object reaches a critical threshold (Albert et al., 2008). In other words, Ahuvia (1993) supported that consumers can develop love toward an object and suggested love as having two dimensions: real and desired integration. Ahuvia (2005b) also compared consumers’ mental model of interpersonal love (i.e., the love prototype) with love for an object and found that in general these two types of love have more similarities than differences in consumer contexts, even though some differences were noted. In addition, according to Ahuvia (2005) “loved” objects are tightly linked to self-identity. Identity discrepancies can be solved by loved objects. Further research supports Ahuvia’s findings (Whang et al., 2004; Thomson, MacInnis & Park, 2005). The Whang et al. (2004) research is considered to be the first to capture consumer’s-product love (Albert et al., 2008). After some years, Lastovicka and Sirianni (2011) were based on Sternberg’s theory (1986, 2006) to define “material possession love”, which is both multidimensional (passion, intimacy and commitment) and multifaceted (meaning that passion, intimacy and commitment set the basis for the seven love forms). *“Passion is the uncompromising motivational component of love; it is the relentless drive energizing one to be with the other. Passion is full of hot emotion, revealing itself in behaviors such as gazing at, or obsessing about, the other”* (Lastovicka & Sirianni, 2011: 2). *“Intimacy means achieving closeness and connectedness with a beloved. Intimacy with possessions can be gained by knowing the beloved both physically and intellectually”* (Lastovicka & Sirianni, 2011: 2). Intimacy is achieved by consumers via a process where they become aware of their possessions both mentally and physically (Lastovicka & Sirianni, 2011). Much of this process of intimacy is intellectual. Intellectual intimacy focuses on remembering/knowing unique details of the possession, such as the unique vehicle identification number (Lastovicka & Sirianni, 2011). Physical intimacy constitutes an additional way to become closed to a loved obsession, for example by focusing on the exterior design and color of car (Lastovicka & Sirianni, 2011). *“Commitment is the consumer’s decision to be in an enduring relationship with his or her possession and a devotion to keep the possession”* (Lastovicka & Sirianni, 2011: 2). According to Lastovicka and Sirianni (2011) seven different love types are generated based on various combinations of intimacy, commitment and passion: Table 6 shows these seven different love types.



Table 6: Lastovicka’s and Sirianni’s (2011) Material Possession Love Typology

Type of love	Intimacy	Passion	Decision/Commitment
Friendship	✓	✗	✗
Infatuation	✗	✓	✗
Empty love	✗	✗	✓
Romantic love	✓	✓	✗
Companionate love	✓	✗	✓
Fatuous love	✗	✓	✓
Enduring romantic love	✓	✓	✓

Source: Lastovicka and Sirianni (2011)

Note: (✓) denotes the presence of the respective component and (✗) denotes the absence of the respective component

(1) *infatuation* is generated by high level of passion alone and is a love at first sight. According to Sternberg (1986), it encompasses high levels of psychophysiological arousal, contributing to vivid and unforgettable memories; (2) *friendship* is yielded by high level of intimacy alone; (3) *empty love* is created by high level of commitment alone, such as a new arranged marriage; (4) *romantic love* is created by high level of intimacy as well as high level of passion. It is light, playful, pluralistic and passionate. Consumers, who develop romantic love for a possession, are open to relationships with other comparable possessions, since there is not commitment; (5) *companionate love* is generated by high level of intimacy and high level of commitment: it was found among computer ownerd and cyclists. It depicts a stable, comfortable, cozy and affectionate relationship, without the passion volatility (Sprecher &Regan, 1998; as cited in Lastovicka & Sirianni, 2011). This means that consumers who fall in companionate love with a possession might have lost the excitement of obtaining an awesome bicycle or the newest laptop, but they develop a long-lasting and comfortable relationship with their possession, which they know well and which they intend tomaintain and use in the future ; (6) *fatuous love* is yielded by high level of passion and high level of commitment and was found at computer owners and is devoid of intimacy. This implies that commitment is obviously made because of a love-at-first-sight infatuation, without profoundly knowing the other



(possession), rather consumers, who develop fatuous love, are focused on total sensory experience of object (for instance, its look, scent, motion, feel, speed, color, shape, taste, and sound), which yields a captivating aesthetic response; finally (7) *enduring romantic love* is created by high level of commitment, high level of passion and high level of intimacy.

### 3.2.2. LOVE CONCEPT TOWARDS BRANDS

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Consumer-brand relationships have shown a fundamental switch from a transactional to a relationship point of view (Fournier et al., 2012; Hegner, Fenko & Teravest, 2017). Although previous studies in consumer behavior and marketing were focused on the consumers' interactions with brands or products as a result of a series of transactions and exchanges, these days, this transaction viewpoint is actually replaced by a relational view (Hegner, Fenko & Teravest, 2017). Today, consumers have also changed and they are seeking new challenges in order to make their lives meaningful (Bauer, Heinrich & Martin, 2007). Consumers frequently satisfy their "need" for meaningful lives via the possession of loved objects or the consumption of material products or brands (e.g., Wallendorf & Arnould, 1988; Ahuvia, 2005; Bauer, Heinrich & Martin, 2007). Love of consumers for specific brands, products, possessions or activities has been widely acknowledged (e.g., Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006, Albert et al., 2008; Batra et al., 2012) and emerged as a new field of branding (Fetscherin & Conway-Dato-on, 2012) "*that, so far, has been the object of limited attention but seems to attract a steadily growing interest among academics as well as practitioners*" (Bergkvist & Bech-Larsen, 2010: 504). The brand love concept constitutes one of the most recent consumer-brand relationships developments (Vernuccio et al., 2015; Kaufmann et al., 2016; Hegner et al., 2017), since it is perceived in the literature as the most emotionally intense consumer brand relationship (Langner et al., 2015; Hegner et al., 2017) and thus it is considered the main objective of brand management (Langner et al., 2015). The brand love concept has been acknowledged and embraced by brand managers, academics and advertising industry, since it plays a crucial strategic role in establishing deep rooted, long lasting



sustainable consumer-brand relationships (Roberts, 2005; Pang et al., 2009; Kohli et al., 2014; Obal et al., 2015; Vernuccio et al., 2015).

Various academic researches have investigated consumer love for a *brand* (e.g., Ahuvia, 1993, 2005; Monga, 2002; Aggarwal, 2004; Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006; Swaminathan et al., 2007; Albert et al., 2008; Fedorikhin et al., 2008; Bergkvist & Bech-Larsen, 2010; Batra, Ahuvia & Bagozzi, 2012; Fetscherin & Conway-Dato-on, 2012; Roy, Eshghi & Sarkar, 2012; Loureiro et al., 2012; Fournier & Alvarez, 2012; Reimann, Castaño, Zaichkowsky & Bechara, 2012; Albert & Merunka, 2013; Sallam, 2014; Sarkar, 2014; Barker, Peacock & Fetscherin, 2015; Drennan et al., 2015; Langner et al., 2015, 2016; Alnawas & Altarifi, 2016; Schlobohm et al., 2016; Maisam & Mahsa, 2016; Kaufmann, Loureiro & Manarioti, 2016; Bagozzi, Batra & Ahuvia, 2017; Hegner, Fenko & Teravest, 2017; Bairrada, Coelho, & Coelho, 2018; Palusuk, Koles & Hasan, 2019; Junaid, Hussain, Basit & Hou, 2019; Bigne, Andreu, Perez & Ruiz, 2020; Sajtos et al., 2020). Brand love is a crucial concept in the literature, because it has been proved to positively influence important marketing constructs such as brand loyalty and WOM (e.g., Fournier, 1998; Thomson, MacInnis & Park, 2005; Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006; Bergkvist & Bech-Larsen, 2010; Batra et al., 2012; Drennan et al., 2015), as well as increased willingness to pay a price premium (e.g., Thomson, MacInnis & Park, 2005; Batra et al., 2012), and forgiveness of brand failures (e.g., Bauer, Heinrich & Albrecht, 2009) among other outcomes. Moreover, brand love is closely tied with company performance, it is predictive of superior performance, it influences profitability, growth and, in turn, higher brand values (Barker, Peacock & Fetscherin, 2015). In addition, academics have found that consumers frequently conceive brands as relationship partners (Keh et al., 2007).

Even though the interest in consumers' brand love is considered to be fairly new and just a few researches examine brand love rather than consumer – brand relationships (Ahuvia, 2005; Whang et al., 2004; Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006), the origin of the research on brand love can be traced back to, among others, the study of Shimp and Madden (1988), who adapted Sternberg's triangular theory of inter-personal love (1986) from psychology, and the work of Belk (1988), who suggested that possessions could constitute an extended self. Later, Fournier (1998) showed that close and intimate relationships, similar to interpersonal relationships, with brands can occur and thus consumers can form and keep strong relationships with brands.





Fournier (1998) also proposed six major categories of brand-consumer relationships, including: affective and socioemotive attachment such as (1) love and passion; (2) self-connection; behavioral ties such as (3) commitment; (4) inter-dependence; and supportive cognitive beliefs such as (5) intimacy; and (6) brand partner quality. The category of love and passion is the cornerstone of all strong brand relationships and represents a richer, deeper, more long-lasting feeling than simple brand preference (Albert et al., 2008; Fetscherin & Conway-Dato-on, 2012).

The consumer's brand love or passion measures the affective depths of such a relationship (Fournier, 1998; Keh et al., 2007). The category of self-connection reflects *“the degree to which the brand delivers on important identity concerns, tasks, or themes, thereby expressing a significant aspect of self”* (Fournier, 1998: 364). Interdependence refers to frequent brand interactions, increased scope and diversity of brand-related activities as well as high intensity of individual interaction events (Fournier, 1998). High levels of commitment depict a strong brand-consumer relationship and intimacy cultivates a strong and stable brand consumer relationship over time. Brand partner quality reflects *“the consumer's evaluation of the brand's performance in its partnership role”* (Fournier, 1998: 365) e.g., making consumers feel wanted and respected, as well as the brand's overall reliability in executing its partnership role and consumer's trust that the brand will deliver what is actually desired.

One of the first studies to thoroughly investigate brand love was Ahuvia's study (1993). More recently, the studies of Ji (2002), Wang et al. (2004), Ahuvia (2005b), Robert (2005), Carroll and Ahuvia (2006), Keh, Pang and Peng (2007), Albert et al., (2008), Bergkvist and Bech-Larsen (2010), Batra, Ahuvia and Bagozzi (2012), Ahuvia, Batra and Bagozzi (2008), Albert, Merunka and Valette-Florence (2008) , Fetscherin and Conway-Dato-on (2012), Roy et al., (2013), Albert and Merunka (2013), Rauschnabel and Ahuvia (2014), Rauschnabel, Ahuvia, Ivens and Leischnig, (2015), Bagozzi, Batra and Ahuvia (2016), Schlobohm et al. (2016) and Kaufmann, Loureiro and Manarioti (2016) have further contributed to our better understanding of love in a consumer behavior context.

Although brand love is an important marketing topic (Batra, Ahuvia & Bagozzi, 2012), *little agreement exists as to what brand love is* (see Albert, Merunka & Valette-Florence, 2008). Fournier (1998) describes brand love as a customer-brand





long term relationship. Roberts (2005) states that brand love denotes the strongest consumer-brand emotional bond and is built upon sensual attraction, intimacy, commitment, empathy, passion, dreams and myths. Keh, Pang and Peng (2007) define brand love as a reciprocal, dynamic, multiplex, and purposive relationship between satisfied consumers and their brands, and develop a tri-dimensional brand love model to characterize the affective, conative, and cognitive features of consumer-brand relationships. Moreover, Carroll and Ahuvia (2006) define brand love as *“the degree of passionate emotional attachment a satisfied consumer has for a particular trade name”*, (p.81). Carroll and Ahuvia (2006) found that brand love is higher for products that provide hedonic and symbolic benefits to consumers. Rossiter (2012) defines brand love as *“achieved only when “Deep Affection” and “Separation Anxiety” are jointly felt in relation to the potential love object ”*, (p.9). According to Tsai (2011, 2014: 568) brand love *“is the customer’s intense affection for and long-lasting relationship with the brand comparable with passionate love, emotional attachment and mutual identification existent across interpersonal interactions”*. Langner, Bruns, Fischer and Rossiter (2016: 16) regard brand love as *“a relationship between consumers and their brands that is pivotally characterized by long-lasting, deep affection for the brand and anticipated separation distress”*.

The brand love concept is comprised of cognitive, emotional and socio-cultural features organized into a mental prototype of love for the brand, goes beyond the expectancy-disconfirmation principle [which, according to Rust & Oliver (1994), constitutes a means to assess the satisfaction of customer based on the discrepancy between the perceived customer expectation and experience in services or products] as well as mental -accounting behavior (Park et al., 2010; Reimann et al., 2012; Batra et al., 2012), and causes not only attitudinal preference and behavioral intention in the target customers but also their incessant stickiness toward the brand (Tsai, 2011, 2014; Malär et al., 2011; Batra et al., 2012; Reimann et al., 2012; Loureiro et al., 2012).

A meaningful differentiation is made between the concepts of brand liking and brand love, where the latter is presented as a more enduring and deeper continuum distinct from the concept of brand liking. Love is generally regarded as conceptually and empirically different from liking (Seligman, Fazio & Zanna, 1980; Sternberg, 1987; Bergkvist & Bech- Larsen, 2010), that is, *“love is not extreme liking but rather a*



*construct that is different from, but related to, liking*” (Sternberg, 1987, as cited in Bergkvist & Bech-Larsen, 2010: 506). Generally, consumers who love a brand incorporate the brand into themselves and have a long-term relationship with them (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006).

Several definitions of brand love in the literature show that it has anywhere from one (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006; Bergkvist & Bech-Larsen, 2010) to 11 dimensions (Albert, Merunka & Valette-Florence, 2008), with most studies presenting different conceptualizations (Batra, Ahuvia & Bagozzi, 2012). Bergkvist and Bech-Larsen (2010) proposed a unidimensional brand love scale using two items, measured by a 4-likert scale (1) “Would you miss / BRAND / if it was no longer available?” and (2) “Do you feel deep affection, like ‘love’, for / BRAND /?”, which suffers from a conceptual limitation, since love is considered to be a multidimensional concept by the striking majority of the academics (Sarkar, 2012). Bergkvist and Bech-Larsen (2010) also suggested that brand love tends to be higher when consumers feel a sense of community with other consumers of the brand.

Carroll and Ahuvia (2006) proposed also a unidimensional scale of brand love. This scale is also subject to criticism for the same reason mentioned above for Bergkvist and Bech-Larsen’s (2010) measurement scale, since the majority of the researches has proved that love is a multidimensional concept (Sarkar, 2011). Carroll and Ahuvia’s (2006) unidimensional love scale elaborates the consumer’s feelings towards a brand and includes characteristics such as passion, attachment, positive evaluations of the brand, positive emotions in response to the brand, and declaration of love for the brand. Carroll and Ahuvia (2006) argue that brand love entails a willingness to declare love (as if the brand were a person) as well as integration of the brand into a consumer’s identity. Thus, a consumer tends to develop greater love feelings towards brands that contribute significantly in shaping his/her identity. Carroll and Ahuvia (2006) investigated the concept of love and its antecedents and consequences. They found that brand love is influenced by a hedonic product and self-expressive brand and in turn it has a positive impact on brand loyalty and word-of-mouth. A self-expressive brand is *“the consumer’s perception of the degree to which the specific brand enhances one’s social self and / or reflects one’s inner self”* (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006: 82); and encompasses two dimensions: inner self and social self.



Brand love is portrayed by physiological arousal and the desire to be connected with the brand across various occasions and implies the brand's existence in the consumers' minds and idealization of their relationship with the brand (Whang et al., 2004). Whang et al. (2004) proposed four elements of love: (1) there is right brand-consumer physical chemistry; (2) the brand and the customer seems to be meant for each other; (3) the brand fits the ideal standard of the customer's self-image; and (4) the customer feels sad if the brand is not available (Whang et al., 2004; as referred in Tsai, 2014:567).

Ji (2002) investigated the love relationship between children and brands and claimed that children can form love relationships with a variety of brands. A child's brand love is represented by focused attention (substitute brands are not acceptable), strong attachment, and high commitment over a long period of time. A child's first brand love experience is identified by a child's adoration of the brand, and has important influence on the child's self-concept and gaining competence development.

Albert et al. (2008) introduced eleven brand love dimensions: (1) *passion* for a brand, which is met in the literature with different names, such as eros or romantic love and is often associated to the love feeling. Passionate love "is a state of intense longing for union with another" (Hatfield & Walster, 1978: 9); (2) *duration of relationship*, which shows whether the brand-consumer relationship exists for a long time. The longer the relationship, the more intimacy one develops towards his/her "partner" and suggests a feeling of satisfaction (e.g., Sternberg, 1986; Ahuvia, 2005b; Albert et al., 2008); (3) *declaration of affect* (feel toward the brand); (4) *self-congruity* (congruity between self-image and product image); (5) *dreams* (when the brand favors consumer dreams, then it takes a dominant place in his/her thoughts); (6) *memories*, evoked by the brand and are linked to sentiments of nostalgia; (7) *pleasure* that the brand provides to the consumer and that fosters affectionate love; (8) *attraction*, which is "an orientation toward or away from a person that may be described as having a value-positive, neutral or negative feel toward the brand" (Albert et al., 2008: 1073); (9) *uniqueness* of the brand and/or of the relationship, which is related to the feeling of idealization; (10) *beauty* of the brand, which plays an important role in favoring a relationship as well as in maintaining a long term relationship (Hatfield & Sprecher, 1995; Sangrador & Yela, 2000; Albert et al., 2008); and (11) *trust*, which demonstrates whether the brand has disappointed the consumer and constitutes a key



dimension of prototypical love (Fehr, 1988; Aron & Westbay, 1996; Albert et al., 2008).

Keh, Pang and Peng (2007) developed a three-dimensional scale (intimacy, passion and commitment) with 11 measurement items. According to Keh, Pang & Peng (2007: 84), brand love is “*the intimate, passionate and committed relationship between a customer and a brand, characterized by its reciprocal, purposive, multiplex and dynamic properties*”. Kamat and Parulekar (2007) identified five dimensions (friendship, contentment, admiration, commitment and yearning) with 52 items. Ortiz and Harrison (2011) proposed four dimensions, which describe consumer- retail love relationships, namely nostalgia (preferences based on childhood memories), comfort (sense of security and positive experiences with the staff, product assortment and atmosphere), it’s me (self- identity) and aspiration (aspirational purchases as well as the aspiration reference groups that influence consumers’ behavior). Batra et al (2008) found seven love dimensions: perceived functional quality, self-related cognitions, positive affect, negative affect, satisfaction, attitude strength and loyalty. Later, Batra et al. (2012) refined these dimensions and proposed the following brand love dimensions: (1) *positive attitude valence*, which describes consumers’ positive evaluations towards the love object; (2) *self-brand integration*, which appears when the love object is integrated into the consumer’s (i) current self-identity as well as (ii) desired self-identity. This love dimension encloses deeply held values and group identities that constitute the basis for consumers to provide (iii) life meaning and other intrinsic rewards. This strong incorporation of the love object into the consumer’s self is supported by (iv) frequent thoughts about the love object; (3) *positive emotional connection* is broader than just positive feelings, entails a sense of positive attachment and gives a sense of “intuitive fit” with the brand in which it feels “just right” (4) *anticipated separation distress*, which means that if the love object were to disappear, it would be emotionally painful for the consumer; (5) *long-term relationship* denoting that the consumer wants the love object to be part of his or her life for a long time; (6) *passion-driven behavior*, which appears when the consumer has a high degree of previous involvement and interaction with the love object, as well as a current passionate desire to use it and a willingness to invest resources such as time and money in it; and (7) *attitude strength*, which denotes the consumer’s high level of certainty and confidence about his/her opinions concerning the love object. It is



obvious that brand love is a higher order, multidimensional concept that encompasses several constructs, which are not synonymous or interchangeable but rather complementary (Batra et al., 2012; Rauschnabel & Ahuvia, 2014). Since the constructs/dimensions that are parts of brand love are different, any given cause may affect each dimension differently.

Furthermore, Batra et al. (2012) found that love is a relationship not just an emotion. Emotions differentiate from relationships in the sense that emotions are short-term affective experiences, whereas relationships can endure for a lifetime and encompass a range of different emotions (Rauschnabel & Ahuvia, 2014). The concept of brand love includes various previously observed consumer behavior constructs that are known to play important roles in building strong and positive relationships (Rauschnabel & Ahuvia, 2014). In addition, brand love can be perceived as an appropriate concept to employ in typical consumer behavior studies and not just in exceptional cases of intense relationships, since brand love is pertinent, even when a consumer's relationship with a brand is not intense enough to normally be considered love (Batra et al., 2012; Rauschnabel & Ahuvia, 2014). This situation exists when consumers use the word "love" strictly for only very strong feelings or/and relationships, such as family. However, even declaring a 4 in a 7 point Likert brand love scale, it is enough to produce crucial improvements in loyalty, WOM and resistance to negative information (Batra et al., 2012). Thus, consumers do not certainly need to have an intense love for a brand. Instead, they just need to love it a little bit more than they love the competition (Rauschnabel & Ahuvia, 2014: 375).

According to Batra et al., (2012), related studies include self-brand connections (Escalas & Bettman 2003); consumers' attachments to brands (Thomson, MacInnis & Park 2005; Park et al., 2010); construction of self-identity (Belk, 1988); consumer-object bonds (Kleine, Kleine & Allen, 1995); and brand communities and reference groups (McAlexander, Schouten & Koenig, 2002). For instance, as it concerns the consumers' attachment to brands, grounded on the interpersonal attachment theory, Thomson et al. (2005) used an item like love in the emotional brand attachment scale indicating that the brand attachment concept is conceptually analogous to brand love (Sarkar et al., 2012). Thomson et al. (2005) proposed three factors of brand love namely: affection, connection and passion. Affection describes the affectionate, loved, peaceful and friendly emotions; passion shows the passionate, delighted and



captivated feelings; connection includes the items of attachment, bondedness and connectedness. Later, some academics such as Fedorikhin et al. (2008), Malär et al. (2011) as well as Vlachos et al. (2010) tested the three-factor model of Thomson et al. (2005) on different brand categories and they affirmed that brand love significantly influences customers' purchase intentions, willingness to pay premium price, word-of-mouth and forgiveness of quality defects. Park et al. (2007, 2010) operationalized consumer-brand loving relationship as a concept measurable by the extent to which the brand accomplishes the consumer's self-relevant goals through functional, emotional and symbolic competences, which foresee the following: (1) the consumer's resource allotment; (2) the actual purchase behavior of the consumer; (3) the share of the product or service brand among directly competing rivals; and (4) prioritizing the product or service brand to accomplish consumer's needs and wants at their fullest (Park et al., 2010; as referred in Tsai, 2014). Rauschnabel et al. (2015) proved that extraverts as well as neurotics are notably inclined to brand love, because these consumers perceive specific brands as their relationship partners.

#### 3.2.2.1 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN INTERPERSONAL AND BRAND LOVE

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Consumer research has often explained brand love phenomena by applying interpersonal love theories and measurements. Aggarwal (2004: 87) stated that "*when consumers form relationships with brands they use norms of interpersonal relationships as a guide in their brand assessments*". This view has steered the implementation of the triangular theory of love (Sternberg 1986) to consumer-brand relationships (Shimp and Madden 1988), particularly in brand love studies (Batra et al. 2012). Numerous academic research attempts have been implemented in order to investigate the nature of brand love and have found that it can be perceived as a *perfect two way love relationship*, in which "*brands respond to consumers like human beings would in a perfect case of anthropomorphism*" (Junaid, Hussain & Hou, 2019: 2) and where object/brand (love) bonding has emerged from the concept of interpersonal love application to studies' framework (e.g., Shimp and Madden, 1988; Ahuvia, 1993; Fournier, 1998; Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006; Keh et al., 2007; Kamat & Parulekar, 2007). However, recent critiques in the field question this approach and highlight its inappropriateness (e.g., Batra, Ahuvia, & Bagozzi, 2012; Langner,





Schmidt & Fischer, 2015). Batra, Bagozzi and Ahuvia (2012) implemented the grounded theory approach to explore the essentials of brand love, identifying brand love as an *imperfect two-way love*. Moreover, Carroll and Ahuvia (2006:81) stressed that “*consumers tend to speak loosely when using the word love in reference to commercial products*”.

On the other hand, there are some other academics, who have suggested that brand love should be investigated based on parasocial perspectives (Fetscherin & Conway Dato-on, 2012; Fetscherin, 2014) and thus see brand love as a *perfect one way love relationship*, leading to better effects (Junaid, Hussain & Hou, 2019). In particular, Fetscherin and Conway-Dato-on (2011) suggested that theories of parasocial love are more suitable when investigating and explaining brand love, rather than that of interpersonal love, since a consumer’s brand love resembles more to a parasocial relationship. Parasocial interaction is “*a perceived relationship of friendship or intimacy by an audience member with a remote media persona, leading to an illusion of a face-to-face relationship*” (Fetscherin & Conway-Dato-on, 2012: 4). Parasocial relationship denotes a uni-directional interpersonal relationship where one party knows a great deal about the other, but the other does not reciprocate the knowledge, for example celebrities and their fans (Fetscherin & Conway-Dato-on, 2012). Parasocial relationship resembles interpersonal relationship, but the former is one-sided and the latter is two-sided . Brands, just as celebrities, do not reciprocate knowledge of the lover and can only participate in a one-sided (parasocial) relationship (Fetscherin & Conway-Dato-on, 2012). Brand love is closer to companionate love rather than erotic love (Fetscherin & Conway-Dato-on, 2012). In the same vein, Schmitt (2013: 250) states that “*ontologically and epistemologically speaking, brands don’t have bodies; they don’t have thoughts and feelings; they don’t have intentionality (they cannot initiate actions on their own), and they cannot interact*”. When a consumer form love relationships/emotions towards a brand, that love is unidirectional (Whang et al., 2004) and thus, “*there is a difference in how consumers process information between relationships with brands and interpersonal relationships*” (Yoon Gutches, Feinberg & Polk, 2006; as cited in Junaid et al., 2019:4).

Moreover, Albert et al., (2008), claim that brand love is a culturally determined phenomenon and falls into neither “category”. Additionally, Albert et al. (2008) posit



that the theory of interpersonal love relationships may be constraining, when applied in consumer research.

*“As a third alternative, the grounded theory approach has been proposed to study brand love, emphasising the importance of the phenomenological experience in consumer-brand relationships”* (Batra et al., 2012, as cited in Palusuk, Koles & Hasan, 2019: 2). Batra and colleagues (2012: 1) stated that *“there are compelling reasons these conceptualizations of interpersonal love should not be applied to brand love”*. What’s more, Batra and colleagues (2012:30) state that *“research on brand love which is derived directly from theories of interpersonal love tends to overlook the crucial issues of how loved brands become part of the consumer’s identity and provide intrinsic benefits. This does not mean, of course, that it is inappropriate to use the interpersonal relationship literature as a source of hypotheses, and even as supporting evidence, for research on consumer-brand relationships”*. Based on the findings of Batra et al. (2012), brand love can be considered as an *imperfect two way love relationship*, which meshes with interpersonal love theories, but also acknowledges and highlights the differences (Junaid, Hussain & Hou, 2019). According to Junaid, Hussain and Hou (2019:4), it is reasonable to perceive brand love as an *imperfect two-way love*, since brand love *“is selfish; consumers know that brands do not return love like a person does, and because brands do not feel anything for their consumers”*, and thus consumer-brand love relationship is far from a *perfect two-way love* and *“less important than interpersonal love”*.

As analyzed earlier many researchers in psychology and sociology have conceptualized and measured love. Masuda (2003: 30) argued in his meta-analyses of love theories that *“in the realm of social psychology research on love, there have been four major love theories constructed”*. These four major love theories are the following: (1) Rubin (1970) who measured love, by proposing the liking scales; (2) Hatfield and Sprecher (1986) who developed the passionate love scale; (3) Hendrick and Hendrick (1986) who introduced the love attitude scale based on Lee’s (1977) early work on the color theory of love; and (4) Sternberg’s (1997) triangular love scale. In Masuda’s (2003: 31) *“dichotomous classification of love scales”*, it is claimed that all of these four major love relationship theories *“are based on the assumption that love comprises at least two aspects, that is sexual attraction to romantic partners, and non-sexual psychological closeness to partners”*. Masuda





(2003) dichotomized the four love scales into erotic love scales [Hatfield & Sprecher (1986); Sternberg (1986)] and companionate love scales [Rubin (1970); Hendrick & Hendrick (1986)] (as cited in Fetscherin, 2014; Junaid et al., 2019). According to Fetscherin (2014) consumers can not have a sexually related (erotic) relationship with brands, and thus the love scale of Hatfield & Sprecher (1986) as well as that of Sternberg (1986) are not suitable for explaining brand love, whereas Rubin's (1970) or Hendrick and Hendrick's (1986) scales for love are more suitable.

Furthermore, Langner, Schmidt and Fischer (2015) explored specifically the differences between the emotional nature of brand love compared with that of interpersonal love. They found that interpersonal love is encompassed by more intense emotions than those of brand love and thus they are perceived as different emotions. Moreover, the same academics found that consumer-brand relationships are usually induced by rational benefits (such as product quality), whereas interpersonal love is often altruistic in nature. Additionally, according to the same authors, brand love is similar to that of interpersonal liking, since the emotionality that is evoked by loved brands is just as intense as that evoked by a close friend. However, Langner et al (2015) also found that consumers' brand love emotions are even more positive than those evoked in close, interpersonal liking relationships. What's more, Whang et al. (2004: 320) claimed that *"although love is an outcome of bi-directional interaction between two partners, when the target of love is replaced with an object (e.g., product or brand), love becomes uni-directional"*.

Overall, there is no doubt that interpersonal and brand love do differ. One major difference is that brand love can be mainly perceived as unidirectional, whereas interpersonal love as bi-directional (Whang et al., 2004) and *"that consumers are not expected to yearn for sexual intimacy with brands, a feeling generally associated with passionate interpersonal love"* (Grunebaum, 1997, as cited in Bergkvist & Bech-Larsen, 2010: 506). Moreover, Langner, Schmidt and Fischer (2015) found that *"interpersonal love is different from brand love as brand love is derived from rational benefits like product quality and that interpersonal love is more arousing than brand love"* (as cited in Gumparathi & Patra, 2020: 9).

Batra et al. (2012:6) stated *"we do not mean to imply that brand love researchers should abstain from citing interpersonal love research as sources of hypotheses or even citing parallels between findings on brand love and interpersonal love"*, but



academics should be careful before transferring interpersonal love theories and scales directly to brand love studies, without taking into account the differences in the emotional nature of brand and interpersonal love (Langner, Schmidt & Fischer, 2015), since consumers process interpersonal relationships in a different part of the brain than they do for brand relationships (Yoon, Gutches, Feinberg & Polk, 2006; Nordhielm, 2008) and brands cannot reciprocate the consumer's love except in the consumer's imagination (Fetscherin & Conway-Dato-on, 2012).

Hence, academics should be cautious when equating brand love with that of interpersonal love, since interpersonal relationships occasionally are absolutely altruistic in nature, whereas consumer-brand love relationships should be perceived as the outcome attributable to the circumstances in which numerous fundamental needs, wants, desires and aspirations of customers are first satisfied by the brand (Tsai, 2011, 2014). In a nutshell, brand love constitutes a complex emotion, maybe the most complex of all (Loureiro & Kaufmann, 2012) as well as a special kind of delicate consumer-brand relationship different from but correlated with the brand's functional and service performance as well as perceived value (Tsai, 2014). It is also obvious that no single theory may capture all the feelings associated with this complex phenomenon, as it may be theoretically constraining (Albert et al., 2008).

All in all, the development of close relationships between consumers and brands are of utmost importance. Currently, it is observed a burgeoning interest, among both practitioners and scholars, in consumers' brand love (Batra, Ahuvia & Bagozzi, 2012). Thus, it is no great wonder that Michael Donnelly, director-global interactive marketing of Coca-Cola Co., stated that *"so much of our metrics aren't about sales, but they're about brand love"* (in Capps, 2007:4, as cited in Batra, Ahuvia & Bagozzi, 2012). Coca-Cola, Harley-Davidson, Manolo Blahnik, McDonald's and Starbucks Coffee are just a few examples of well-known brands that managed to build, develop and keep profound emotional ties with their customers, driven by love and passion (Bauer, Heinrich & Martin, 2007).

Undoubtedly, the increasing importance of brand love in marketing practice necessitates further the theoretical and empirical investigation of the notion of brand love, as well as its determinants and consequences, in new contexts, such as tourism, since *"branding in tourist destinations context is a subject of inquiry due to several possible effects on consumer behavior"* (Tasci & Kozak, 2006: 299). Moreover,



destination branding has been considered a potent marketing tool (Morgan, Pritchard & Pride, 2004) and has become a quite active research area (Konecnik & Gartner, 2007). Research in the field of tourism about destination love can contribute in understanding and predicting the actions that tourists take in accordance with the emotions, feelings, meanings, and values that they assign to a destination.

### 3.3. LOVE TOWARD SERVICES

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In services, the relational exchanges between consumers and service firms are way more interactive than in the context of brands, since consumers definitely have the tendency to perceive and respond to service firms as active participants (Long-Tolbert & Gammoh, 2012). Consumers' emotional bonds to a service brand stems mainly from their interactions with service staff and, and to a lesser extent from other brand attributes (Berry, 2000). It is clear that the human element in services (employees) plays a crucial role, since it constitutes the service brand and the conduit for emotional bonding (Carbone, 2004; Morhart, Herzog & Tomczak, 2009) and it influences the consumer experience as well as emotions, such as love, for service brands (Long-Tolbert & Gammoh, 2012). Customers and service employees co-produce the service, since they are both engaged physically, emotionally and psychologically in the service process and exchange (Long-Tolbert & Gammoh, 2012).

In their study, Long-Tolbert and Gammoh (2012) propose that the interpersonal interaction between service employees, especially in the frontline, and service customers worked as a main conduit for the development of service brand love. The same authors suggest that (1) gratitude, (2) partner quality and (3) social support can serve as the basis to enhance customer intentions to develop stronger emotional ties, and more specifically love, to the service brand, as well as to give insights into how service staff, as brand representatives, can enhance social attraction and approach behavior. Long-Tolbert and Gammoh's (2012) conceptualization of service brand love is composed by Sternberg's (1986) three love dimensions (intimacy, passion and commitment/decision).

Gratitude is conceived as the *“appreciation felt after one has benefited from gifts, altruistic acts or the benevolence of the brand or agents associated with the brand”*



(Lazarus & Lazarus, 1994; McCullough, Emmons & Tsang, 2002; Watkins, Scheer, Ovnicek & Kolts, 2006; Tsang, 2006; as cited in Long-Tolbert & Gammoh, 2012:393). For example, gratitude can be expressed as a personalized “thank you” message from the service provider to the customer, which could contribute to the “humanization” of the service provider in the mind of customers and thus customers would develop more favorable attitudes and positive emotions towards this service provider. Gratitude is a thankful appreciation for what one has received (Machleit & Mantel, 2001; Long-Tolbert & Gammoh, 2012), enhances the sense of connectedness to other people (McCullough et al., 2002), increases the perceived likeability of the benefactor (Watkins et al., 2006) and builds a sense of dependency and indebtedness to the benefactor (Emmons & Crumpler, 2000).

Partner quality is seen as *“a relational partner’s capacity to create and sustain productive relationships with customers, including acting in customer’s best interest and showing responsibility and reliability as an exchange partner”* (Aaker, Fournier & Brasel, 2004; Fournier, 1998; Breivik & Thorbjornsen, 2008; as cited in Long-Tolbert & Gammoh, 2012:393). Partner quality is a major dimension of Fournier’s (1998) consumer-brand relationships. According to Fournier (1998:365) partner quality dimension *“refers to consumer perceptions of the brand’s performance in a relational exchange”* Aaker, Fournier and Brasel (2004) propose partner quality as an important construct within the nomological network of consumer-brand relationships and allude to its connection to several service brand love dimensions (Long-Tolbert & Gammoh, 2012).

Social support is perceived as *“the extent to which a relational partner (a firm or its employees) undertakes actions to improve customers’ general well-being and to show they care or want to help customers”* (Fehr, 1993; Adelman et al., 1994; Buss, 1998; Yim et al., 2008; as cited in Long-Tolbert & Gammoh, 2012:393). Social support in services shows the emphasis of service providers in terms of actions they undertake in order to improve the general well-being of their customers as human beings, given their particular needs, rather than to improve their status, as exchange partners engaged in mutually beneficial market transactions (Long-Tolbert & Gammoh, 2012). Socially supportive behaviors constitute a recognizable love feature that can make people feel loved and valued by partners (Fehr, 1993; Trobst, 2000; Long-Tolbert & Gammoh, 2012). These socially supportive people are more possibly to maintain



relationships (Shumaker & Brownell, 1984), since these individuals are emotionally happier and healthier than unsupported ones (Long-Tolbert & Gammoh, 2012).

The positive influence of gratitude, partner quality and social support on service love is significantly varied between a positive and negative service delivery process. Service delivery is made up of two different dimensions: the service process (e.g., how the service was delivered) as well as the service outcome (e.g., what was delivered), and together they form consumers' evaluations of any given service experience (Gronroos, 1988; Long-Tolbert & Gammoh, 2012). The service delivery process mainly shows how well the service staff manage the social and expressive elements of service encounters and it has crucial implications for consumer perceptions of service quality and satisfaction with service staff performance (Bitner et al., 1990; Long-Tolbert & Gammoh, 2012). Customers who do not experience service failures (compared to failure) love a service brand more intensely (i.e. higher intimacy), consider the service brand more favorably as an exchange partner, and demonstrate an enhanced sense of gratitude and happiness (Aaker et al., 2004; Soscia, 2008; Long-Tolbert & Gammoh, 2012). Positive interpersonal encounters are crucial to nurturing happiness and fostering a mutually satisfying love-based relationship (Byrne & Murnen, 1988; Long-Tolbert & Gammoh, 2012).

Service brand love can flourish when customers create and experience positive feelings with respect to how they were treated during the service delivery (Long-Tolbert & Gammoh, 2012). From all the above mentioned, it can be understood that there is transferability of interpersonal love into the services domain (Long-Tolbert & Gammoh, 2012).

Recently, Alnawas and Altarifi (2016) examined the concept of brand love within the context of hotel industry. They used the components of love based on the study of Sternberg (1987) and they found an empirical support for the applicability of Sternberg's (1987) conceptualization of love in the hotel industry. Each of the three components of Sternberg's love conceptualization (intimacy, passion, decision/commitment) contributed significantly to customer experience of love in the hotel industry. Alnawas and Altarifi (2016) found that the component of intimacy shows the strongest association with loyalty, followed by that of decision/commitment and lastly that of passion.



### 3.4. LOVE TOWARD DESTINATIONS/PLACES

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There is no doubt that tourism sector is dynamic and the purchase process involves an inherent uncertainty and is usually expensive (Cai, 2002). In addition, unlike other tangible products, tourists cannot “test drive” and try the destinations prior to their choice (Gartner, 1989; Eby, Molnar & Cai 1999; Cai, 2002). Thus, *“the decision involves greater risk and extensive information search, and depends on tourists’ mental construct of what a potential destination has to offer relative to their needs”* (Cai, 2002:721).

Destinations are geographic locations to which tourists travel (Framke, 2002) and that are assigned with meanings and values by society and individuals (Halpenny, 2010). A destination consists of both tangible and intangible components (e.g., Hu & Ritchie, 1993; Murphy, Pritchard, & Smith, 2000) and, over time, its importance and meaning differs between individuals, groups and cultures (Halpenny, 2010). Moreover, a destination can be considered as a *“home full of feelings and intimacy, albeit different in nature from the conventional home”* (Trauer & Ryan, 2005: 482), and leisure activities need to lean on emotions, fantasies and feelings in order to analyze and interpret tourist behavior (Sanchez, Callarisa, Rodriguez & Moliner, 2006).

Destination marketing has increasingly gained recognition in business and academia (e.g., Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2008; Gertner, 2011; Swanson, 2015). Even though the concept of branding has been vastly applied to consumer products, the concept of tourism destination branding is still in its infancy, as it constitutes a relatively recent phenomenon (Blain, Levy & Ritchie, 2005; Hosany et al., 2006; Park & Petrick, 2006; Baker, 2012) and seems to be rising as one of the most compelling tools for destination marketers, who seek to achieve a competitive advantage (Murphy, Benckendorff & Moscardo, 2007).

Some readers may question the application of already entrenched branding principles to destinations (Giannopoulos, Piha & Avlonitis, 2011). Of course, a tourism destination is multi-attributed per se (Pike, 2005) and inherently complex, as it is grounded on innumerable products, services and experiences which are all managed, distributed and “consumed” by different stakeholders, for instance tourists, hoteliers, travel agencies, tour operators, destination management organizations, residents and so on (Konecnik & Go, 2008; Giannopoulos, Piha & Avlonitis, 2011). However, there





is a general consensus both in academics and practitioners that a tourism destination can be considered as a product or a brand and thus the brand concept can be transferred to that of tourism destination in a much the same way (Van Raaij, 1986; McIntosh & Goeldner, 1990; Kim, 1998; Buhalis, 2000; Kotler & Gertner, 2002; Olins, 2002; Anholt, 2002; Kozak, 2002; Papadopoulos & Heslop, 2002; Beerli & Martin, 2004; Yoon & Uysal, 2005; Lucarelli & Berg, 2011; Giannopoulos, Piha & Avlonitis, 2011; Hankinson, 2015), and it has to be managed from a strategic point of view (Beerli & Martin, 2004).

Destination brands are “*socially constructed meaning systems*” (Warnaby & Medway, 2013: 348) and various conceptualizations have been suggested (Hankinson, 2015). Destination branding is defined as “*the set of marketing activities that (1) support the creation of a name, symbol, logo, word, mark or other graphic that readily identifies and differentiates a destination; that (2) consistently convey the expectation of a memorable travel experience that is uniquely associated with the destination; that (3) serve to consolidate and reinforce the emotional connection between the visitor and the destination; and that (4) reduce consumer search costs and perceived risk*” (Blain et al., 2005: 337).

Numerous aspects of branding have been adapted to a destination/place context, such as brand image (Blain et al., 2005), brand equity (Gartner & Ruzzier, 2011) as well as brand communities (Levy & Hassay, 2005). The notion of destination/place brands entails that tourists could form positive unforgettable travel experiences for a specific destination, which could result in their repeat visitations to that specific destination in order to recollect pleasant memories of the destination experience (Pike, 2005).

In the literature, more and more attention is paid to studying the feelings that people develop towards important places in their lives (Hernandez, Hidalgo, Salazar-Laplace & Hess, 2007), and various studies have been carried out in order to try to comprehend the role of emotions in the tourism and hospitality context (Hosany & Gilbert, 2010). After all, “*tourist destinations are rich in terms of experiential attributes, and the potential to evoke an emotional response is even greater*” (Otto & Ritchie 1996, as cited in Hosany & Gilbert, 2010: 515). Stressing the importance of feelings and emotions in destination branding, Morgan and Pitchard (2004:61) claimed that “*the battle for consumers in tomorrow’s destination marketplace will be fought not over price but over hearts and minds*”.





In social sciences, it has been argued that places or destinations constitute the fundamental basis of identification and affiliation, which provide meaning and purpose to life (Williams & Vaske, 2003). People can develop an affective connection with specific places or destinations (Hidalgo & Hernandez, 2001, as cited in Hosany & Gilbert, 2010), as well as with their immediate environment (Machleit & Eroglu, 2000), in which meanings, beliefs and values are attached (Sack, 1992).

Emotion research is essential for tourism studies, since it opens up new research avenues in the field (Buda, Hauteserre & Johnston, 2014). According to Hosany & Gilbert (2010), emotion research has been carried out to examine, among others, the determinants of postconsumption emotions (Muller, Tse & Venkatasubramaniam, 1991), the relationship between emotions and overall satisfaction (De Rojas & Camarero, 2008; del Bosque & San Martin, 2008), customer loyalty (e.g., Barsky & Nash, 2002), behavioral intentions (e.g., Bigné, Andreu & Gnoth, 2005; Jang & Namkung 2009), and emotions as a segmentation variable for leisure and tourism services (Bigné & Andreu, 2004). Hosany & Gilbert (2010) also claim that several scholars such as Chuang (2007) and Kwortnik & Ross (2007) have examined the influence of emotions on decisions to purchase tourism and leisure services. However, empirical studies on the role of emotions in the context of tourist destinations are rather limited (Hosany & Gilbert, 2010).

Recently, there is an emerging interest in the literature for understanding the personal bonds or attachments people form with specific places or landscapes (Williams & Vaske, 2003; Kyle, Graefe, Manning & Bacon, 2004). This academic interest has raised the attention toward the study of human-place bonds (Kyle, Graefe, Manning & Bacon, 2004). Studies of this phenomenon have appeared in various academic fields (Kyle, Graefe, Manning & Bacon, 2004), including environmental psychology, natural resource management, environmental education, and tourism (e.g., Vaske & Kobrin, 2001; Kyle, Graefe, & Manning, 2005; Halpenny, 2010; Ramkissoon et al., 2012; Raymond, Brown, & Robinson, 2011; Ramkissoon et al., 2013). Most of the human-place bonds studies have fallen under the study of “place attachment” (Low & Altman, 1992; Hummon, 1992; Moore & Graefe, 1994; Mesch & Manor, 1998; Bricker & Kerstetter, 2000; Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001; Hidalgo & Hernandez, 2001; Vaske & Kobrin, 2001; Uzzell et al., 2002; Kyle, Absher, & Graefe, 2003; Mazumdar & Mazumdar, 2004; Hou et al., 2005; Hwang, Lee, & Chan, 2005; Gross



& Brown, 2008; Raymond et al., 2010; Yuksel et al., 2010; Halpenny, 2010; Scannell & Gifford, 2010; Rollero & De Piccoli, 2010 ; Morgan, 2010; Altman & Low, 2012; Ramkissoon et al., 2013; Seamon, 2013; Scannell & Gifford, 2017; Isa, Ariyanto & Kiumarsi, 2019; Dwyer, Chen & Lee, 2019). In addition, some other related concepts, which denote people's strong bond and affinity with places, such as "sense of place" (Hay, 1998a, b), "rootedness" (Tuan, 1980), "insideness" (Relph, 1976), "place bonding" (e.g., Hammitt, Kyle & Oh, 2009; Lewicka, 2011; Cheng & Kuo, 2015) and "topophilia" (e.g., Tuan, 1974; Chhabra & Kim, 2018) have been studied.

Dimensions of place attachment include place identity (Proshansky, 1978; Proshansky, Fabian, & Kaminoff, 1983; Stedman, 2002; Hinds & Sparks, 2008; Prayag & Ryan, 2012), place affect (Kals, Shumaker, & Montada, 1999; Hinds & Sparks, 2008), place social bonding (Hammitt, Backlund, & Bixler, 2006; Ramkissoon et al., 2012), and place dependence (Stokols & Shumaker, 1981; Bricker & Kerstetter, 2000; Prayag & Ryan, 2012). Considerable theoretical and methodological advancements have been made in this area by researchers and scholars (Kyle et al., 2005), arguing that place attachment is an important part of the self and evokes strong emotions (Yuksel et al., 2010). In their study, Yuksel et al. (2010: 274) state that place attachment is viewed either as an outcome variable, predicted by activity involvement and place characteristics (Hou et al., 2005; Hwang, Lee & Chan, 2005; Gross & Brown, 2008), motivations (Kyle, Graefe, Manning, & Bacon, 2004), as well as commitment, demographics, specialization and previous experience (Moore & Graefe, 1994; Kyle et al., 2004a), or as an antecedent variable, influencing consumer loyalty, customer satisfaction, perceived crowding, spending preferences, and leisure participation patterns (e.g., Kyle, Absher, & Graefe, 2003; Kyle et al., 2004a; Hwang et al., 2005; George & Alexandru, 2005; Hou, Lin, & Morais, 2005; Brocato, 2006; Alexandris, Kouthoris & Meligdis, 2006; Lee et al., 2007; Simpson & Siquaw, 2008).

Even though the significance of the concept of brand love in the marketing literature has been widely acknowledged by the academics, it has rarely been investigated in the tourism field as a way of attracting tourists (Aro et al., 2018). The tourism field is certainly appropriate for love research, given the high competition in the tourism sector for tourists, funding, as well as support from different stakeholder groups (Aro et al., 2018). Only very recently, tourism academic studies focus their attention on the investigation of place/destination brand love (Swanson, 2015, 2017; Aro et al., 2018;



Adriotis et al., 2020), as well as on distinct species of love, such as destination “agape” (Christou, 2018) or self-love (Lykoudi, Zouni & Tsogas, 2020). Some individuals claim they have real love feelings for places (Ahuvia, 1992: 188-198) or destinations (Hosany & Gilbert, 2010). Even though individuals usually travel and visit many different places, only some of their holiday destinations are loved (Ahuvia, 2005; Aro et al., 2018). As a consequence, a destination (brand) have to be and offer something special and unique for the tourist in order to prompt/trigger him or her to fall in love with it (Aro et al., 2018). According to Cheng and Kuo (2015) individuals may form an emotional bond to places that they have visited only one time or even places that are unknown. In line with this argument, Swanson (2015) suggests that there are even some individuals who are in love with what some destination brands represent, although never having visited the destinations.

Acknowledging the importance of brand love, many hospitality businesses around the world invest vast amount of money in order to make consumers fall in love with their brands (Kwon & Mattila, 2015). For instance, InterContinental Hotels incorporate the notion of brand love not only in its strategy for customers but also in its employee recruitment strategy. More specifically, in their website they state that: *“Everyone at IHG is focused on creating Great Hotels Guests Love. Whether we are working in one of our hotels or one of our corporate offices across the world, we pull together as one company with this one goal. We want our guests to love our hotels, because guests that love hotels come back to them”* (as cited in Kwon & Mattila, 2015).

In addition, Tsai (2014) suggested three dimensions of hotel brand love based on the literature of brand love, namely passionate love, emotional attachment, and self-brand integration, which in turn can ameliorate and maintain destination loyalty. In services marketing, service brand love (e.g. “I am passionate about the brand”) has been proved to be a crucial factor facilitating the creation of service brand loyalty (Tsai, 2011). Hence passionate love can be conceived as an indicator to evaluate the level of tourists’ psychological intimacy towards destinations (Lee & Hyun, 2016). Furthermore, emotional attachment and self-brand integration are likely to influence tourists’ loyalty and preferences (Hosany & Gilbert, 2010; Yuksel, Yuksel & Bilim, 2010; Lee & Hyun, 2016).

Furthermore, there are destination marketing organizations (DMOs) all around the world that have used the emotion of “love” in their marketing and branding strategies



(Hosany & Gilbert, 2010). Taiwan, has successfully created, for its destination promotional campaigns, the slogan “*touch your heart*” in order to attract (potential) tourists (Hosany & Gilbert, 2010). Portugal is positioned as a place offering many different experiences, such as romance, and that visitors can “*feel the passion*” throughout the country (Hosany & Gilbert, 2010). Another example of using love in destination campaigns is Cyprus’s “*In Your Heart*” media campaign (Hosany & Gilbert, 2010).

Hosany and Gilbert (2010) developed a Destination Emotion Scale in order to measure the diversification and intensity of tourists’ emotional experiences toward destinations. Destination Emotion Scale of Hosany and Gilbert (2010) includes three different dimensions namely (1) joy, which was proved to be a key aspect of tourists’ emotional experiences, constitutes an intrinsic component of peak experiences (e.g., Mathes et al. 1982), is often associated with positive outcomes, such as playfulness and meaningfulness of life (Frijda, 1986; de Rivera, Verette & Weiner, 1989) and entails emotion items, such as pleasure, cheerfulness, happiness, delight, entertainment and enthusiasm; (2) love consists of items like tenderness, caring, affection, warm-hearted, romantic, passionate, sentimental and compassionate. Love has been considered as a key dimension in understanding consumers’ emotional experiences (Hosany & Gilbert, 2010) and (3) positive surprise consists of emotion items such as amazement, astonishment, and fascination. Surprise can be both positive and negative, although academics mostly give attention to positive surprise, which has been proved to positively influence satisfaction and loyalty (Westbrook & Oliver, 1991). Destination Emotion Scale includes only positive valence emotions, since holiday vacations constitute a set of positive experiential processes (Hirschman and Holbrook 1982; Mannell and Iso-Ahola 1987; Hosany, 2011). Holiday experiences give rise to positive emotions, such as joy, love and positive surprise, which in turn ameliorate an individual’s sense of well-being and contribute to one’s overall happiness with life (Gilbert & Abdullah, 2004; Sirgy, 2010; Hosany, 2011).

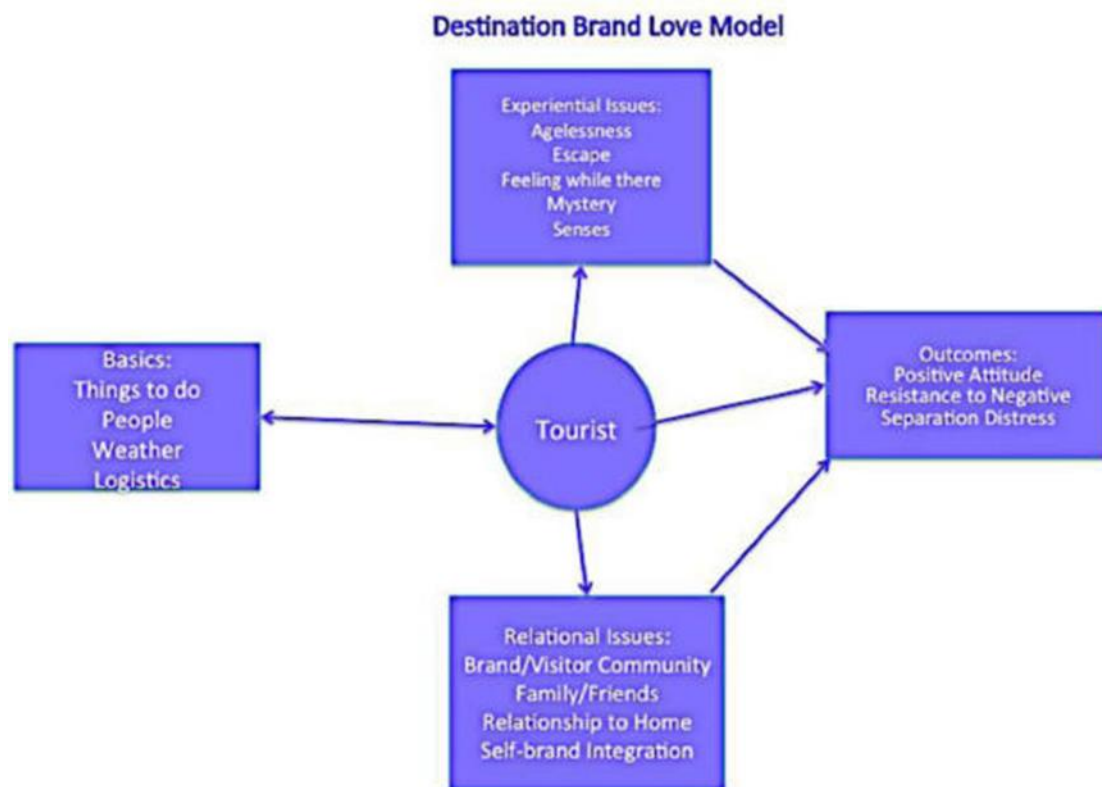
Hosany’s and Gilbert’s (2010) subscale of love is unidimensional, which is subject to criticism, since love is considered as being a multidimensional concept by the vast majority of the academics and it captures a rather limited range of the love concept.

According to Swanson (2017) tourists’ destination love is not exclusive or exclusionary, since individuals can develop love feelings for more than one

destination, for different reasons, getting different benefits out of relationships with different places, and this leads to the identification of different types of destination brand love (Swanson, 2017).

Swanson (2017) described destination brand love as (1) *philia*, (2) *storge* and (3) *eros* and each researched place constitutes an exemplar of a different type of destination brand love: participants of Swanson’s study showed *philia* for Orlando, *storge* for Minneapolis and *eros* for Las Vegas.

Figure 4: Destination Brand Love Model by Swanson (2017)



*Philia* is described as a friendship type of love that is freely chosen and entails deep respect, give and take and virtue. Tourists ,who have *philia* for a destination, develop high levels of familiarity and comfort with the place and an appreciation of the experience felt there (Swanson, 2017).

*Storge* represents an affection type of love that usually exists among family members and is a more “natural” love, resilient against any negative situations (Swanson, 2017). People who develop this kind of love, have a relationship with the destination



for reasons beyond their control (such as having roots from this place, having lived there, having family who live there).

*Eros* represents a passionate and romantic type of love that can be linked with a “*love at first sight*”, a dearth or deficiency of logic as well as potentially “lust” (Swanson, 2017). Tourists who develop *eros* for a destination have a sense of awe about the place, especially (like an obsessed lover) during the first few visits and fall in love right away with it (Swanson, 2017). Their visits tend to be intense and filled with indulgence, and thus they are usually kept short in duration (Swanson, 2017).

In Swanson’s model, the tourist is focal to the creation of his or her destination brand love. Swanson’s (2017) model of Destination Brand Love includes the “antecedents” of destination love, which represent the “basics” category of model including the variety of activities to do when being to the place as well as the tourists’ favorable weather. The basics of a quality tourism destination facilitate the value co-creation, relational as well as the experiential themes through the interaction with tourists. The “relational issues” category of the model entails family and friends (e.g. visitors’ opportunity to spend time with their family and friends in the tourism destinations); destination brand community (e.g. visitors’ desire to bring new visitors/tourists to a destination); relationship with respect to home (e.g. visitors’ desire for familiarity/unfamiliarity to home); and self-brand integration (e.g. visitors’ feeling that the place brand is part of their lives and having an attachment to the place in addition to love). The “experiential issues” category of the model represents visitors’ senses (e.g. sensory experiences); mystery (e.g. fantasy, surprise or uncertainty linked with a place); agelessness (being able to enjoy the places at different ages); escape (an ability to getaway whilst at the tourist places); and feelings while being there (such as feeling happy).

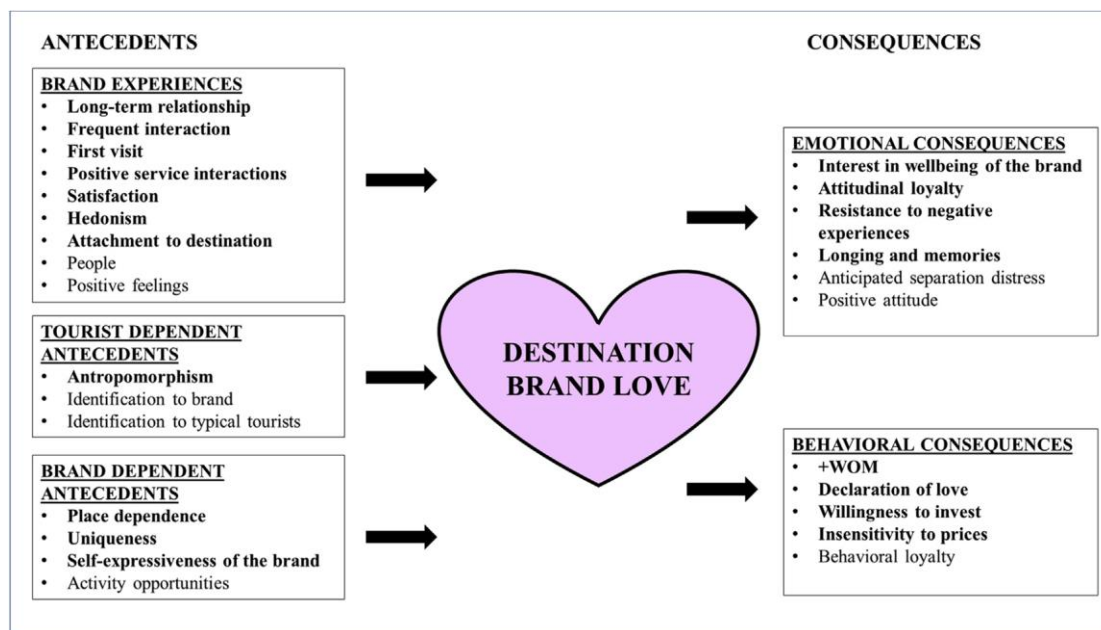
The development of these experiential and relational themes is further formed when the tourist is not even present at the destination, for instance through memories (e.g. souvenirs bought at this destination and remind him/her of the destination) or direct marketing activities of loyalty clubs associated with the destination in question (Swanson, 2017), and leads to the tourist’s formation of destination love and ultimately results in the outcome themes. The “outcomes” category of the model describes the visitors’ anticipation/avoidance of separation distress (e.g., feeling sad upon leaving a place and/or protecting themselves from showing such separation



distress); resistance to negative information (e.g., bad comments or opinions about the place); and positive attitude towards the place (e.g., visitors developing firm, positive attitudes towards tourist destinations and being certain in their desires and plans to return). It is suggested that different destination types correspond to or are associated with different kinds of destination brand love, since these three different kinds of love are associated with different types of destinations (Swanson, 2017).

Aro, Suomi and Saraniemi (2018) investigated the antecedents and consequences of destination brand love. They considered that different individuals describe and experience love for the same destination differently and destination brand love is changing over time, from passionate love toward more caring love. However, Aro et al. (2018) did not defined and operationalized destination brand love.

Figure 5: Antecedents and consequences of destination brand love



Source: Aro, K., Suomi, K., & Saraniemi, S. (2018). Antecedents and consequences of destination brand love-A case study from Finnish Lapland. *Tourism Management*, 67, 71-81.

According to Aro et al. (2018), brand experiences, tourist dependent antecedents and brand dependent antecedents (categorized based on whether a specific antecedent primarily associates with the tourist him/ herself, the destination brand, or the experiences at the destination) are identified as the antecedents of destination brand love. More specifically, *antecedents* include:





- (1) *The first visit and the length of the brand relationship*: respondents had positive impressions from their first visit in Yllas (destination brand) and those who had a long-term relationship with this specific destination brand mentioned their memories from the destination, which was characterized by certain phases of life. Although long-term relationship as well as shared history and memories with a destination brand boosts the formation of brand love, it is possible an individual to develop destination brand love during his/her first visit.
- (2) *Brand experiences and interaction with service providers*: respondents described their experience with Yllas with positive and warm feelings (e.g., familiarity, joy, internal peace and relaxation). This denotes the hedonistic nature of the destination brand (Aro et al., 2018). Yllas was considered to be a self-expressive, a unique and irreplaceable destination brand for the interviewees. The uniqueness of the destination brand was described as resulting from familiarity, a feeling of home, pleasant memories, people, the best options for various activities, a special atmosphere, a beautiful landscape, the best ski trails in Finland, the magic of Lapland, and being relaxing. All these can be seen as categories of place dependence and activity opportunity (Aro et al., 2018).
- (3) *Identification and self-expression*: participants were asked to describe Yllas as a person, and thus anthropomorphism was appeared in the study by the researchers. The majority of the participants found something similar between themselves and Yllas. The participants also claimed that at Yllas they were able to do things that are important and pleasurable for them (Aro et al., 2018).
- (4) *Meaningful people for the interviewees*: meaningful and pleasant people (e.g., relatives, friends with whom individuals had vacations there or customer service people) related to the destination brand were also essential for the formation of individuals' brand love (Aro et al., 2018). This suggestion is in line with that of Swanson (2015; 2017).



The consequences of destination brand love encompasses emotional and behavioral consequences. They include:

- (1) *Interest in the well-being of the destination brand*: participants wished prosperity for the place and demonstrated interest for its well-being.
- (2) *Positive word of mouth*: all interviewees have had spread the good word for Yllas.
- (3) *Resistance to negative experiences*: interviewees showed resistance to weaknesses and challenges faced to the destination.
- (4) *Anticipated separation distress and willingness to invest*: interviewees claimed that they would feel bad and miserable if they were not able to travel to Yllas again, and that they would probably travel less or stop altogether, since it is unlikely that they would find a destination comparable to Yllas.
- (5) *Memories*: interviewees had special and pleasant memories of the destination, which could be seen as longing for Yllas.

Previous academic research on brand love have predominantly been conducted in the USA (e.g., Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006; Batra et al., 2012), and studies on destination brand love seems to focus only on the USA (Swanson, 2015, 2017), Japan (Lee & Hyun, 2016), Finland (Aro et al., 2018), Cyprus (Christou, 2018) or London (Andriotis et al., 2020). This denotes the urge for a universal conceptualization of the destination love notion, given the current lack in existing knowledge on destination love, as well as the need for further research, which should be consisted of multicultural and diverse sample, located in other countries, since brand love studies have shown potential dissimilarities between different cultures in both the brand love outcomes and the terms used in relation to the concept (Albert et al., 2008).

Even though the academic studies of Swanson (2015, 2017), Aro et al. (2018), Christou (2018) and Andriotis et al. (2020) are the first to explore the notion of destination brand love or part of it (e.g., “agape”), as well as its antecedents and consequences (Aro et al., 2018), they all lack of empirical evidence, since only qualitative methods were used (e.g., collages, photos, case studies and interviews) and the number of respondents were only 20 (Swanson, 2017), 10 (Aro et al., 2018),



35(Andriotis et al., 2020) respectively. The respondents of Swanson's study were from the USA and were asked only for three specific USA cities: Orlando, Florida; Las Vegas, Nevada and Minneapolis, Minnesota. Moreover, respondents of the Aro's et al. (2018) study were also domestic tourists -and not international- and they were also asked about a specific Finnish destination. Participants of the Andrioti's et al. (2020) study were internationals and of Christou's (2018) study were Europeans. Hence the proposed conceptual models of these studies should be examined with caution, as the destination brand love categories, antecedents and consequences that were proposed may be a result of biased perceptions and opinions of an extremely restricted sample size and the findings cannot be generalized. More rigorous research should be implemented for the new notion of destination love as a universal concept, since it lacks completely a robust theoretical definition and an empirical justification as well as operationalization.

The studies of Hisany and Gilbert (2010), who include love in their Destination Emotion Scale, Swanson (2017) as well as Aro et al. (2018) , who investigate the notion of destination brand love, its antecedents and its consequences cannot be generalized since there is specificity of their results to one culture (British nationals for Hosany and Gilbert, USA nationals for Swanson and Finnish nationals for Aro and colleagues).

According to Russell (1991) individuals of different cultural background and languages perceive emotions differently. Some emotions that are regarded as desirable in some cultures, in some others they can be considered as unacceptable (Ellsworth & Scherer, 2003).

Destination love should be considered a multidisciplinary and distinct construct and thus its investigation should stem from various academic fields, such as tourism, marketing, psychology, sociology and geography, among others as well as from different nationalities/ cultures.

Although the academics have widely investigated the construct of place attachment for understanding human-place bonds, and have recently started investigating the concept of destination brand love, academic studies focused on the investigation and operationalization of place/destination love as a universal concept are totally missing in the literature. This is a significant gap in the literature, since a universal conceptualization of destination love is important in order to give a definition of the



concept in academia and capture as many as possible dimensions of love in tourism context.

### 3.5. LOVE TRAJECTORIES

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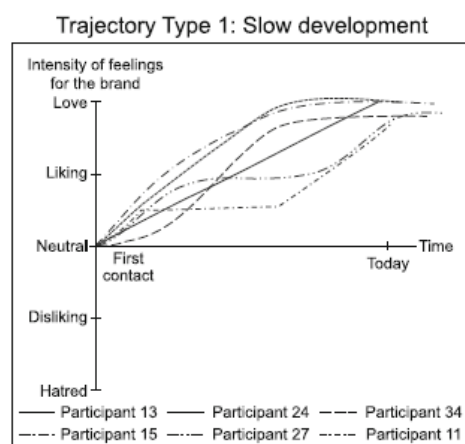
Love is not a stable emotion or relationship, since it is subjective and it can fluctuates over time as well as over personal circumstances and experiences. Individuals are unique human beings, who feel and perceive love differently. For example, not all people fall in love “at first sight”, some may need more or less time (even years) to develop love feelings for other people, brands, objects, destinations. Interpersonal love trajectories vary in their speed, steadiness and time (e.g., Hatfield & Walster, 1978; Huston, Surra, Fitzgerald & Cate, 1981; Surra, 1985, 1987; Sternberg, 1986; Chang & Chan, 2007; RIELA, Rodriguez, Aron, Xu & Acevedo, 2010). For instance, in the study of RIELA and colleagues (2010), 56% of the respondents rated their speed of falling in love as “fast or very fast” and the rest of them (44 %) as “slow or very slow”. Moreover, the study of Barelds and Barelds-Dijkstra (2007) showed that the speed with which individuals fall in love is not related to the ultimate duration or perceived relationship quality. Sternberg (1986) suggested that couples, who experience love at first sight have a higher level of passion, even though the levels of the other love components (intimacy and commitment) are similar compared with couples who gradually develop “friends-first” relationships.

Many scholars in the field of psychology and sociology have examined how different components of love change over time. Hatfield and Walster (1978) support that passionate love typifies early relationships, diminishes over time, and generally gives room to growing companionate love in successful relationships. Accordingly, Sternberg (1986) suggests that “*passion peaks early in a relationship and declines, and that intimacy and commitment grow over the course of a romantic relationship*” (as cited in Graham, 2011: 752). On the other hand, Hatfield, Pillemer, O’Brien and Le (2008) found that both companionate and passionate love diminish as time passes. However, Acevedo and Aron (2009) proved that what declines over time is in fact the romantic obsession component of passion, and not the romantic love itself. According

to Hatfield and Walster (1978), as well as Sprecher and Regan (1998) passionate love becomes a more companionate love over time.

Various trajectories occur on the paths to brand love (Langner et al., 2016). This is not strange, since relationships are unique and may undergo major changes, up or down (Langner et al., 2016). Fournier (1998) reveals high variability in the brand relationships trajectories. Although some brand relationships show a steady growth pattern, some others achieve a stable level very fast. Huber, Meyer and Schmid (2015) claimed that the tendency of hedonic brands to promote affective responses such as brand love does not diminish as time passes, but rather remains stable, stressing that hedonic amenities, such as fun and enjoyment are essential in a consumer's perception over the entire course of a relationship. This denotes that even in long-term consumer-brand relationships, the hedonic elements of a brand do not pall concerning their impact on passionate love, not in the beginning of the relationship, and absolutely not in later phases of the relationship (Huber, Meyer & Schmid, 2015). According to Langner et al. (2016), most brand love relationships initiated with neutral feelings or with brand liking (some even with brand dislike), but not love. However, there were some others initiated brand loving from the first contact onwards (Langner et al., 2016). The majority of brand love trajectories are characterized by a rise of brand positive affect (Langner et al., 2016). Langner et al. (2016) proposed and depicted five distinct brand love trajectory types, namely "slow development", "liking becomes love", "love all the way", "bumpy road" and "turnabout".

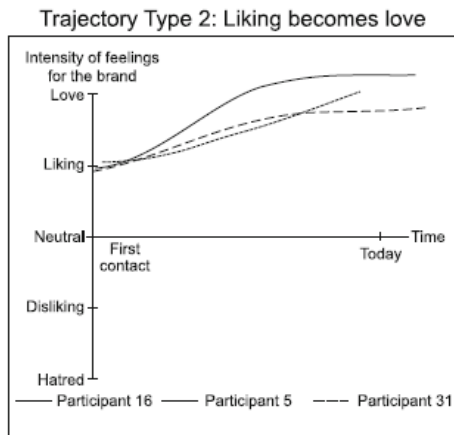
- Trajectory type 1: slow development



Source: Langner et al.(2016)

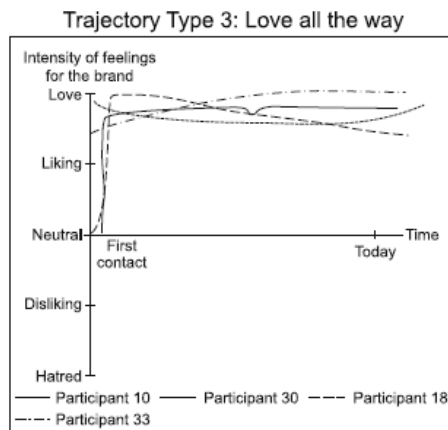
“*slow development*” illustrates a relatively slow upward shift to love feeling that initiates with a neutral feeling during the first contact with the brand.

- Trajectory type 2: “*Liking becomes love*” describes a shift from merely liking the brand to actually loving it.



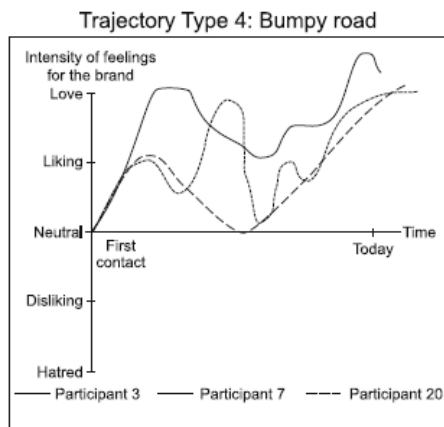
Source: Langner et al.(2016)

- Trajectory type 3: “*Love all the way*” denotes brand love that created either at first sight or very shortly after the first contact and has been kept until now.



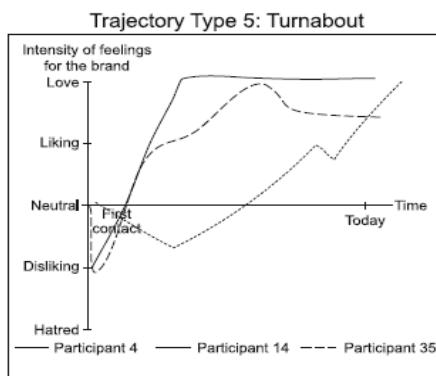
Source: Langner et al.(2016)

- Trajectory type 4: “*Bumpy road*” refers to a fluctuating, even erratic, path to the consumer’s current state of brand love.



Source: Langner et al.(2016)

- Trajectory type 5: “*Turnabout*” illustrates paths that initiate with a “dislike” (because of “identity issues”) toward the brand that shifts to love over time.



Source: Langner et al.(2016)

According to the same academics (Langner et al., 2016), brand love is not a synonym with enhancement of brand liking, but it is a distinct concept, whose development and maintenance constitutes a complex and multifaceted phenomenon and it is strongly affected by positive experiences with the brand. According to the feelings-as-information theory, there is a distinction between the integral and incidental sources of judgment (cf. Bodenhausen, 1993), which also lies to the distinguishment of experiences (product versus personal) that leads to brand love (Langner et al., 2016). Personal experiences constitute incidental sources of feelings that even though they cannot be controlled by the manager, they affect judgments and feelings towards the brands (Schwarz & Clore, 2007; Schwarz, 2012; Langner et al., 2016). Product and





brand experiences are integral to brand evaluations, which nonetheless are not always sufficient for creating and maintaining brand love relationships (Langner et al., 2016). The positive (incidental) personal experiences, such as childhood memories, interpersonal relationships, hobbies, vacations and living abroad constitute crucial incidents to shape brand love trajectories (Langner et al., 2016). The affect evoked by product and individual experiences constitutes an information source to assess the brand (Langner et al., 2016).

### **3.6. SUBJECTIVITY IN LOVE: CULTURAL AND GENDER VARIATIONS**

Love constitutes a subjective notion, highly dependent on individual and cultural factors as well as on its interpretation (Christou, 2018). Academics across various disciplines have tried to investigate and give insights into the impact of culture and ethnicity on the emotion of love (Doherty, Hatfield, Thomson & Choo, 1994). Researchers from the field of psychology and anthropology have contended that passionate love is a cultural universal, being evident at all times and in all places (Doherty, Hatfield, Thomson & Choo, 1994). Many cross-cultural theorists, on the other hand, argue that, even today, culture and ethnicity have a significant effect on how men and women perceive passionate and companionate love and how they deal with such emotions (Dion & Dion, 1993; Hatfield & Rapson, 1993; Doherty, Hatfield, Thomson & Choo, 1994). Some questions that have been arising from the literature are whether passionate and companionate love cultural are universals and whether these feelings are determined by culture and ethnicity (Doherty, Hatfield, Thomson & Choo, 1994). Men and women from different cultural and ethnic settings seem to have similar attitudes and behavior towards love (Doherty, Hatfield, Thomson & Choo, 1994). However, according to Dion & Dion (1996) in order academics to understand better the notion of romantic love they must take into account the contribution of cultural factors. In their study, Jankowiak and Fischer (1992) provide strong evidence that romantic love is (near) universal across different cultures. On the contrary, Stone (1988) highlights that romantic love is perceived differently across different cultures and societies. Moreover, Wu and Shaver (1992) found differences in how different



cultural groups (Americans versus Chinese) view love. Chinese listed more negative features about love in comparison with the Americans. Thus, from this study it can be figured out that cultural variations based on the emotion of love are not merely differences which reflect a biological core. Instead, these cultural differences can give insights into qualitatively various aspects of love that have developed and evolved across different societies and time phases (Dion & Dion, 1996). Shaver, Wu & Schwartz (1992) found that Chinese individuals have a “darker” view of love, since they equate love with sadness, jealousy, sorrow and other negative views, whereas Americans and Italians equate love with happiness. Additionally, different cultures seem to use differently the expression “I love you”; although some cultures use it merely for romantic declarations of love, some other cultures give to it a much broader distribution (Wilkins & Gareis, 2006; Christou, 2018).

Furthermore, Kim & Hatfield (2004) argue that culture influences the perceptions of love. In addition, gender plays a significant role in the love expression. Men love more passionately than women, whereas women love more companionately than men (Traupmann & Hatfield, 1981; Dion & Dion, 1993).

### 3.7. SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES AMONG THE CONCEPTS OF LOVE, ATTACHMENT, PASSION LIKE AND INVOLVEMENT

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The concepts of love, emotional attachment, passion as well as romance share several similarities. First of all, all these concepts stress the word “attachment” (e.g., Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006; Bauer et al., 2007; Park et al., 2010; Patwardhan & Balasubramanian, 2011; Batra et al., 2012; Jiang, 2019). Moreover, they all constitute theoretically well-established and methodologically reliable and valid concepts that connect to desirable consumer behaviours, such as, loyalty, positive word of mouth, price premium as well as resistance to negative brand evaluations (e.g., Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006; Bauer et al., 2007; Patwardhan & Balasubramanian, 2011; Batra et al., 2012). Additionally, there are overlaps in their measurement scales.

However, love stands out among all these concepts, because it has a more ample variety of antecedents and consequences and it is more inclusive than attachment and passion (Batra et al., 2012; Aro et al., 2018; Jiang, 2019). Brand love’s nature is



multi-dimensional and encompasses not only affection, positive emotional connection, pleasure, and passion, as the concepts of emotional attachment and passion do (Patwardhan & Balasubramanian, 2011; Thomson, MacInnis, & Park, 2005), but also it captures attitude strength and long-term relationships (Batra et al., 2012), two dimensions that have not been addressed in brand emotional attachment and passion (Jiang, 2019). Carroll & Ahuvia (2006) suggest that brand love includes passion, declarations of love, attachment, as well as positive evaluations and reactions.

### 3.7.1. LOVE VERSUS ATTACHMENT

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Numerous academics argue that attachment and love are related but conceptually different concepts (Aronson, Wilson & Akert, 2006; Chang & Chieng, 2006; Heinrich, Albrecht & Bauer, 2012; Loureiro, Ruediger & Demetris, 2012). Attachment is perceived a selective social or emotional bond (Bowlby, 1969, 1973, 1980; Ainsworth, 1989; Hennessy, 1997). In fact, in the field of (social) psychology, attachment is considered as an essential part of love (Sternberg & Barnes, 1988; Bartholomew & Perlman, 1994) or one aspect of love (Carter, 1998; Yela, 2006). Furthermore, attachment may be manifested in the absence of love, whereas it is highly impossible that love can occur in the absence of attachment (Carter, 1998). Hazan and Shaver (1990) state that love is basically an attachment process via which attachment ties are created. The attachment process as well as the fear to lose the partner can boost the passionate love (Hatfield & Rapson, 1993).

In the Marketing literature, researchers sometimes seem to interchangeably use the terms “brand love” and “brand attachment” (Vlachos & Vrechopoulos, 2012). Some others do not differentiate the two concepts at all and support that Brand Attachment and Brand Love are “*two facets of the same single penny*” (Moussa, 2015: 79). But are they? According to Hwang & Kandampully (2012: 101) “*brand love necessitates the intensity of emotional responses toward an object, while emotional attachment does not necessarily require such intensity*”. Moreover, some other academics in the Marketing field claim that being in love with a product does not necessarily imply attachment (Whang et al., 2004). Albert et al.’s (2008) brand love dimensions are



founded on theories of love, not attachment. These academics clearly support that brand love is different from brand attachment. In addition, Park et al. (2010) differentiate emotional attachment to brands from other brand-related constructs like attitudes, involvement, commitment and love. Moreover, Loureiro et al. (2012), as well as Tsiotsou and Goldsmith (2017) consider brand love and brand attachment as different concepts. In order to develop love feelings toward a brand, consumers must be attached to it, feeling that the brand is irreplaceable and missing it when they do not have the brand (Loureiro et al., 2012).

Lacoeuilhe (2000) transferred the concept of “attachment between two people” to the marketing context and Thomson, MacInnis, and Park (2005) built an “emotional attachment to brands” measurement scale. Carroll and Ahuvia (2006) as well as Batra et al. (2012), perceived emotional attachment as a dimension or part of love.

In tourism literature, Tsai (2014) as well as Lee and Hyun (2016) also perceived emotional attachment as a dimension/part of love. In addition, based on an extensive literature review, Aro, Suomi and Saraniemi (2018) stated that even though there are similarities between the concepts of love and attachment, they actually differ in that love is a more complex phenomenon than mere attachment. Moreover, Aro et al. (2018) considered destination brand love to establish a stronger bond than place attachment.

As a consequence, it would be not wise to use emotional attachment scales to investigate love in the context of brands (Heinrich et al., 2012) and places/destinations. Future research should distinguish productively between love and attachment (Fisher, 2006). Thus, a clear distinction among conceptually sound and empirically validated place-human bond types deepens the understanding of emotion research in tourism.

### **3.7.2. LOVE VERSUS PASSION AND AFFECTION**

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Passion is usually linked to the love feeling (Lee, 1977; Sternberg, 1986; Hatfield, 1988) and it is met in the literature with various names, such as eros (e.g., Lee, 1977; Hendrick & Hendrick, 1986) or romantic love (e.g., Rubin, 1970). Several studies have found that passion is an essential part/ component of love (Sternberg, 1986,



1997, 2006; Hendrick & Hendrick 1989; Lemieux & Hale 2002; Whitley, 1993; Aron & Westbay, 1996; Yela, 2006; Overbeek, Ha, Scholte, de Kemp & Engels, 2007). In addition, findings regarding interpersonal love from the fields of neuroscience (Fisher, 2006) and social psychology (Hatfield, 1988; Baumeister & Bratslavsky, 1999) support that the love feeling consists of two dimensions: affection and passion.

In the field of Marketing, various academics demonstrate that passion is a component/part of love (e.g., Belk, Ger & Askegaard, 2003; Thomson et al., 2005; Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006; Keh, Pang & Peng, 2007; Albert et al., 2008; Bauer, Heinrich & Albrecht, 2009; Batra et al., 2012). *“Passion usually corresponds to a phase in a love relationship when partners have limited knowledge of each other”* (Albert et al., 2013: 908), thus in the beginning of a relationship, and the intensity of feelings between the two partners vary and decrease over time (Huber et al., 2015). . Passionate love is considered to be *“a state of intense longing for union with another”* (Hatfield & Walster, 1978: 9) or according to Baumeister and Bratslavsky (1999) a state of deep physiological arousal and it describes almost any strong and profound emotional state.

In line with Fisher (2006) and Hatfield (1988), Albert et al. (2008), as well as Shirkhodaei and Nabizade (2011) support that brand love is determined by two factors namely brand passion and brand affection (as referred in Maisam & Mahsa, 2016). Brand passion is perceived *“a primarily affective, extremely positive attitude toward a specific brand that leads to emotional attachment and influences relevant behavioral factors”* (Bauer et al., 2007: 2190, as cited in Albert et al., 2013: 905), which *“describes the zeal and enthusiasm features of consumer-brand relationships”* (Keh, Pang, & Peng, 2007: 84, as cited in Albert et al., 2013: 905) and *“reflects intense and aroused positive feelings toward a brand”* (Thomson, MacInnis, & Park, 2005: 80, as cited in Albert et al., 2013: 905). Brand passion is a *“psychological construct comprised of excitation, infatuation, and obsession with a brand”* (Albert & Merunka, 2013: 908). According to Albert et al. (2009) brand passion consists of brand pleasure and brand idealization.

❖ *Brand pleasure*: Positive excitements such as joy and happiness are related to love and can boost love and intimacy (Fehr & Russell, 1991). In the context of brand love, joy has a positive impact on the duration of the relationship (Maisam & Mahsa, 2016).



- ❖ *Brand idealization*: Idealization reflects the “magical” nature of consumer-brand relationship, since consumers imagine the brand as their highest wish to reach their ideal perfectionism as well as a means to show off. Hence the brand has an excellent/ideal position at their minds (Shirkhodaei & Nabizade, 2011, as referred in Maisam & Mahsa, 2016, 2016).

Brand affection is “a consumer’s degree of positive brand related affect in a particular consumer-brand interaction” (Hollebeek, Glynn & Brodie, 2014:10). Albert et al. (2009) suggest that brand affection consists of brand intimacy, brand dream, duration of brand-consumer relationship, brand memories, and brand uniqueness.

- ❖ *Brand intimacy*: intimacy is described as a feeling of closeness, friendliness, connectedness, bondedness and devotion in the love issue in interpersonal relationships (Sternberg, 1986; Bauer & Heinrich, 2006).
- ❖ *Brand dream*: devoted consumers reveal their dreams about a brand and when the brand favors consumers’ dreams, then it takes a dominant place in their minds (Albert et al., 2008; Maisam & Mahsa, 2016, 2016). In interpersonal relationships, (the duration of) thinking about partner is a good sign of love (as referred in Maisam & Mahsa, 2016).
- ❖ *Duration of consumer-brand relationship*: Albert et al., (2008), state that the longer the relationship, the more intimacy (strong familiarity) one develops towards his/her “partner” and suggests the degree of satisfaction.
- ❖ *Brand memories*: A brand can evoke positive and important memories in consumer’s mindset that can be linked to sentiments of nostalgia (Albert et al., 2008, Maisam & Mahsa, 2016).
- ❖ *Brand uniqueness*: brand uniqueness or brand-consumer relationship uniqueness is related to the feeling of idealization (Albert et al., 2008) that has been stressed in most of the theories of interpersonal relationships (Shirkhodaei & Nabizade, 2011, as referred in Maisam & Mahsa, 2016).



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### 3.7.3. LOVE VERSUS ROMANCE

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Love and romance may seem similar but in fact they are different concepts (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006; Patwardhan & Balasubramanian, 2011; Aydin & Zehir, 2017). Romance is perceived as an attraction and love may or may not occur eventually after brand romance (Aydin & Zehir, 2017). This means that consumers may have an intense attraction to a brand, but they may not love this brand. According to Sternberg (1986), romance is a sub-set of complete love.

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### 3.7.4. LOVE VERSUS LIKE

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The concepts of brand love and brand liking are probably linked, as brand liking seems to constitute a pre-stage of loving and that brand liking can potentially be transformed into brand loving (Batra et al., 2012). Furthermore, Carroll and Ahuvia (2006) argued that brand love encompasses higher emotional intensity than brand liking. Huber, Meyer and Schmid (2015) treated brand love and brand liking as conceptually different concepts as well. The same authors state that conceptually, low levels of brand love do not show brand liking, rather it is simply indicated that consumers do not love a brand. Langner et al. (2015) distinguished the emotional natures of brand love and brand liking clearly, as brand love is way more arousing than brand liking, with a more positive valence. Consumers, who love a brand, experience intense and positive emotions, which lead to positive behaviors for the brand. Sternberg (1986) proposed an “absence test” to differentiate mere liking from love based on the individual’s reaction to the absence of a beloved person (Langner et al., 2016). More specifically, Sternberg (1986) perceives liking as a kind of love, which occurs when a person experiences only the intimacy component of love, in the absence of feelings of intense passion or long-term commitment. Sternberg (1986) explained this distinguishment between love and like as if a typical friend whom a person mere likes goes away, for a short or long period of time, he/she may miss this particular friend, but he/ she does not tend to linger on the loss, since the he/she can uphold the friendship with that person later on. On the contrary, when a close relationship goes beyond liking, an individual’s reaction to the absence of a friend or





a particular person is quite different, since he/she vigorously misses the other person and tends to linger on or be engrossed with that absence.

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### 3.7.5. LOVE VERSUS INVOLVEMENT

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Involvement is seen as a consumer's recognition, attitudes, consideration, personal demand, conception, and the intensity of interest for a particular brand/product (e.g., Traylor, 1981; Park & Young, 1983; Guthrie & Kim, 2009; Aydin & Zehir, 2017). Involvement lies within the realm of cognition (Zaichkowsky, 1986) and it can be used to measure the level of brand interest and brand's significance to the consumer (Guthrie & Kim, 2009). So, it may be assumed that it is not intense and complex emotion like love.

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### 3.8. ANTECEDENTS OF LOVE IN MARKETING AND TOURISM

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In marketing and tourism field, numerous studies (Bergkvist & Bech-Larsen, 2010; Batra et al., 2012; Rauschnabel & Ahuvia, 2014; Aro et al., 2018) have found various antecedents (e.g., satisfaction, sense of community, consumer delight, individual romanticism, anthropomorphism, quality, brand experience, place dependence etc) and outcomes of love (e.g., loyalty, WOM, resistance to negative information, willingness to pay a price premium). In the next sections, satisfaction, motivation, destination image and experience as antecedents as well as loyalty and WOM as outcomes of love are described in detail.

It is necessary to stress that in the literature of branding, love can be developed either based on experience with a brand or through controlled (firm-sponsored) or uncontrolled (word-of-mouth) communication about a brand (Berry, 2000, as cited in Roy et al., 2013). Hence a question of causality between love and other marketing concepts should come up. For example, in case of brand experience, love is an antecedent of word of mouth in the majority of the studies. However, if there is no



experience with the brand, then word of mouth could reasonably be an antecedent of love.

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### 3.8.1. EXPERIENCE IN BRANDING

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What is brand experience and how it affects consumer behavior? “*Brand experience is conceptualized as sensations, feelings, cognitions, and behavioral responses evoked by brand-related stimuli that are part of a brand's design and identity, packaging, communications, and environments*” (Brakus, Schmitt & Zarantonello, 2009:52). Experiences that are aroused by brand-related stimuli, such as store ambience, aesthetics, product packaging, advertisements and the brand itself, are labeled as brand experiences (Brakus et al., 2009). Thus brand experience constitutes an internal and subjective response and could lead to a firm emotional bonding between the consumer and the brand ( Brakus et al , 2009 ).

The concept of brand experience has attracted the attention of Marketing scholars, since the development of marketing strategies for both products and services are based on the understanding of how consumers experience brands (Brakus, Schmitt & Zarantonello, 2009). Many studies in the marketing and consumer literatures have revealed that experience appears when consumers seek for products, they purchase them and receive service, and lastly they consume them (Holbrook, 2000; Arnould, Price & Zinkhan, 2002; Brakus, Schmitt & Zhang, 2008; Brakus, Schmitt & Zarantonello, 2009).

The interaction with a product creates experience with it, for instance when consumers seek for products, examine and evaluate them (Hoch, 2002), buy them and eventually consume them. The experience consumers obtain about a product can be either direct when they come into contact with a product physically (Hoch & Ha, 1986) or indirect when consumers come into contact with a product virtually or through advertisement (Hoch & Ha, 1986; Kempf & Smith, 1998).

It is argued that brand experience is an internal and subjective response toward a brand and consists of several dimensions (sensory, affective, behavioral, intellectual), which, if triggered by a brand-related stimuli, may lead to a strong emotional relationship between the brand and the consumer (Brakus et al , 2009, as cited in Roy



et al., 2013). Carroll and Ahuvia (2006) define brand love as the degree of passionate emotional attachment a satisfied consumer has for a particular brand, denoting experience as a prerequisite for love. Furthermore, according to the same authors, consumers who love a brand have usually integrated the brand into themselves and have longer-term relationship with them, implying that consumers should have experienced the brand in order to be able to develop love toward that brand.

However, according to Roy et al. (2013), a consumer can manifest feelings for a brand (such as liking and yearning) without having experienced the brand at all. In addition, according to the same scholars, it is plausible to argue, theoretically, that the affective component of brand experience contributes to yielding romantic brand love by stimulating brand-related arousal, but empirical evidence is needed in the literature in order to confirm it. According to Roy et al. (2013), the consumer, theoretically, is possible to attach meaning to brands even if he/she has not had any direct experience with the brand, for example through external communications, such as word of mouth, but empirical support is needed.

Apart from product experiences, consumers can have shopping and service experiences too, when for example a consumer visits a store and interacts with its physical environment, its salespeople, its policies, practices (Hui & Bateson, 1991; Kerin, Jain & Howard, 1992) and business philosophy in general. Thus, aesthetics and atmospheric variables, as well as personnel influence the experience of consumer (Boulding, Kalra, Staelin & Zeithaml, 1993; Jones, 1999; Arnold, Reynolds, Ponder & Lueg, 2005; Ofir & Simonson, 2007). Furthermore, several academics have studied how customer experience influences their feelings, brand attitudes, and their satisfaction (Grace & O'Cass, 2004).

Consumers can also obtain experience when they simply use and consume products (Brakus, Schmitt & Zarantonello, 2009). Consumption experiences are multidimensional and entail not only utilitarian dimensions but also hedonic ones, like feelings, pleasure, fantasies, and fun (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982; Brakus, Schmitt & Zarantonello, 2009). In a nutshell, consumer experiences can appear in various settings both directly and indirectly. The vast majority of consumer experiences arise directly when they purchase and consume products (Brakus, Schmitt & Zarantonello, 2009). However, experiences can also appear indirectly for instance through advertising and marketing communications (Brakus, Schmitt & Zarantonello, 2009).



Experiences consumers obtain for products differ in strength, intensity, valence and reflection (Brakus, Schmitt & Zarantonello, 2009); this is reasonable since some brand experiences are fiercer, more profound, more positive/negative or more spontaneous (and thus short-lived) or deliberate (and thus long-lasting) than others (Brakus, Schmitt & Zarantonello, 2009). Long lasting brand experiences that are kept in the consumer's memory can influence consumer's loyalty and satisfaction (Reicheld, 1996; Oliver, 1997).

Brand experience is linked but it is conceptually different from other brand constructs, such as brand involvement, consumer delight, brand attachment, brand attitudes and brand personality (Brakus, Schmitt & Zarantonello, 2009). Attitudes constitute general evaluations based on affective reactions or beliefs (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Murphy & Zajonc, 1993). However, brand experiences entail specific sensations, cognitions, and behavioral responses caused by specific brand related stimuli and thus they are not general evaluative judgments about the brand (e.g., "I like the brand"). (Brakus, Schmitt & Zarantonello, 2009). For instance, experiences may include specific feelings, not just an overall "liking". Sometimes, experiences might lean on general evaluations and attitudes, especially evaluations of the experience itself (e.g., "I like the experience"), but the overall attitude towards the experience captures only a tiny part of the whole brand experience (Brakus, Schmitt & Zarantonello, 2009). Verhoef and colleagues (2002) suggest that brand experience length positively influences various relationship aspects (e.g., trust, satisfaction and commitment).

As it concerns emotions, brand experience does not constitute entirely a strong emotional bond between a consumer and a brand and thus it cannot be perceived as an emotional relationship concept, like brand attachment does (Brakus, Schmitt & Zarantonello, 2009), since it includes in addition to the affect dimension, sensory, intellectual and behavioral dimensions as well. Over time, emotional bonding with brand can be one possible internal consequence of brand experience (Brakus, Schmitt & Zarantonello, 2009). However, the above mentioned academics did not test empirically the relationship between brand emotional bonding and brand experience as well as they did not explicate how the other brand experience dimensions (sensory, intellectual and behavioural) could result in emotion (Sarkar, Ponnampalani & Murthy, 2012).



The conceptualization of brand experience has been studied in various streams of the academic literature such as philosophy, cognitive science, and experiential marketing and management (Brakus, Schmitt & Zarantonello, 2009). Schmitt (1999) stated that consumers develop experiences through sense, feelings, thinking, action, and relation. Moreover, Brakus, Schmitt and Zarantonello (2009) found four dimensions of brand experience; sensory, affective, intellectual, and behavioral. Firstly, brands can elicit strong visual impression on the customer -sensory dimension- (Jung & Soo, 2012). Brands also evoke feelings, emotions or sentiments. Brands can trigger feelings and consumers can develop emotional ties with them- affective dimension- (Zarantonello & Schmitt, 2010). The intellectual dimension includes the brands' ability to make consumers think or feel curious (Jung & Soo, 2012) and the behavioral dimension entails physical actions and behaviors when consumers use the brand, bodily experiences, lifestyles, and interaction with brands (Zarantonello & Schmitt, 2010).

Moreover, Brakus et al. (2009) developed a brand experience scale that does not contain a passion or arousal component, even though previous academic studies on brand love suggested (Shimp & Madden, 1988; Thomson et al., 2005) that passion is experienced by an individual in a brand purchase context (Sarkar, Ponnamp & Murthy, 2012). This study is focused on the relationship between experiences and emotions (love). There are evidence in the literature that experience has a decisive effect on emotions, since the romantic brand love concept is linked to the experiential or hedonic aspect of brand purchase behavior (Sarkar, Ponnamp & Murthy, 2012).

Brand love is a feeling of intimacy and passion for a brand (Sternberg, 1986, 1997). Intimacy and passion are interrelated, since intimacy is broadly stemmed from affect and passion is aroused by intimacy (Sternberg, 1986). Hence, favorable affective brand experiences lead to both brand intimacy and brand-passion (Sarkar, Ponnamp & Murthy, 2012). Furthermore, Lee, Jeon and Yoon (2010) proposed that the affective and behavioral dimensions of experiences influence brand attachment.



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3.8.2. EXPERIENCE IN SERVICES & TOURISM

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*«The Industrial & Service Economies are in the past;  
Today it is all about experiences»  
Pine & Gilmore (1999)*

Numerous academics in services marketing literature have stated that the key to keep positive customer opinions about the service brand is to convert the service product into an experience product (Pine & Gilmore, 1998; Gobe, 2001; Pullman & Gross, 2004). Pine and Gilmore (1999) claimed that we live in the era of Experience Economy, meaning that we value most experiences than products or services. The same academics also stressed that the most desired and added value holidays are those that offer unique and memorable experiences as well as personal development or transformation (learning new skills), such as adventure tourism and cultural tourism.

Business need to sell experiences rather than products or services per se (Pine & Gilmore, 1999). Consumers obtain experience when they pay in order to spend time cherishing various unforgettable events that a company offers; companies are offering experiences every time they engage consumers, coming in contact with them in a personal, memorable way (Pine & Gilmore, 1999; Morrison & Crane, 2007).

Consumers have an extraordinary experience, when they simply experience high levels of emotional fierceness and which sustains over time (Arnould & Price, 1993). Consumers perceive that their experience is successful when it is felt as uncommon and unforgettable, and when they would desire to repeat and maintain it over time as well as delightfully promote it through word of mouth (Pine & Gilmore, 1999). The same academics state that there is a difference between a service and an experience which lies in the emotional link that is developed between the offering and the consumer. This implies that a consumer should develop an emotional linkage to the service context in order to successfully complete a service encounter or experience (Morrison & Crane, 2007). Once the emotion relationship is made, the consumer is more possibly to feel higher levels of post-purchase satisfaction and loyalty (Morrison & Crane, 2007).



Evidence in the literature show that brand experiences will stimulate loyalty by forming emotional bonds via an engaging, compelling and consistent context (Pullman & Gross, 2004). According to Carbone and Haeckel (1994) the context (the environment in which the service encounter occurs) includes two components, physical (it is composed of “clues” that are generated by the sights, sounds, textures and smells of the environment); and relational (it is made up of those ‘clues’ that emerge from people and the behaviours in which they engage).

Pullman and Gross (2004) state that in service brands the interaction between consumers of the service or between consumers and the service providers is of utmost importance, since it cultivates the identification of consumers with the service providers and the other consumers of the service brand. When consumers identify with the service brand as well as with the other consumers of the service brand they adopt the interests and the characteristics of the service brand and they make those interests and characteristics their own (Pullman & Gross, 2004). Based on this, the same authors support that effective service experiential design forms loyalty when service providers lean on employees and customers to achieve a shared identity and emotional bonding during the customer’s experience. Apart from the relational context (which was analyzed in the previous lines) Pullman and Gross (2004) posit that the physical context of the service environment (such as aesthetics or symbols) plays an important role in creating consumer’s emotion but much smaller than relational context, which is considered to be far more powerful generator of positive customer emotion. Forming a strong physical environment may be essential to create positive customer emotion, but it is not sufficient, since positive emotions are formed mainly by the extended, personalized and direct interaction between the customers and the service personnel.

In tourism, the acknowledgment of the creation and supply of tourism experience was prompt and decisive. From the early 1970s, the tourism literature referred to tourism experience and many academics define the complex tourism product as an experience (Middleton, 1979; Taylor, 1980; Smith, 1989; Graefe & Vaske, 1987; Mannell & Iso-Ahola, 1987; Otto & Ritchie, 1996), since the tourism product covers the complete experience from the moment someone leaves home until he/she returns to it (Medlik





& Middleton, 1973; Go, 1981). There is no doubt that tourism experience constitutes a focal concept for current tourism research and management (Tung & Ritchie, 2011). Tourism is a function of memorable experiences and delivers them to tourists. Pizam (2010: 343) states that “*creating memorable experiences is the essence and the raison d’etre of the hospitality industry*”. In the field of tourism, many academics are concerned with the nature of the tourist experience and consequently with the experience of place (Trauer & Ryan, 2005). How tourists perceive a destination is mainly socially constructed (Henderson & Frelke, 2000; Williams, 2001; Stokowski, 2002) and thus determined by various factors (Trauer & Ryan, 2005). These consist of the attribution of meaning by tourists, which meanings are formed by tourists’ previous travels, experiences as well as their perceived and ‘actual’ knowledge, the attitude of host residents, the promise made by the advertisements, the destination itself (its history, culture, topography and aesthetics) and the nature of the company that a tourist cherishes (Trauer & Ryan, 2005).

Tourists visit a destination in order to fulfill experience-related needs and wants (Prebensen, Chen & Uysal, 2013). According to Cooper, Fletcher, Gilbert, Wanhill and Shepherd (1998), destinations can be defined as the focus of facilities and services designed to meet the needs of the tourists. Destinations constitute a mixture of tourism products, offering an integrated experience to consumers (Buhalis, 2000). Destination elements, unarguably, have been the research source by many academics (Medlik & Middleton, 1973; Burkart & Medlik, 1981; Gunn, 1988; Middleton, 1988; Cooper et al., 1993; Laws, 1995; Buhalis, 2000), and in combination with demand elements, they create tourist experience (Zouni & Kouremenos, 2008).

Although experience is a relatively old term in the field of marketing, the increased importance and attention given on experience within tourism, hospitality and leisure sectors is new (Jennings & Nickerson, 2006). In the tourism field, the consumption experience is characterized by intangibility, dynamism and subjectivity (Botterill & Crompton, 1996; Jayanti & Ghosh, 1996), which make it a complicated construct (Williams & Soutar, 2009). “*Tourism consumption experiences include a complex mix of functional, objective and tangible components (e.g., travelling, eating, drinking, and recreating), as well as subjective, hedonic, emotional and symbolic components (e.g., enjoying an experience, laughing, socialising and having fun)*” (Williams & Soutar, 2009: 415).



Tourist's experience lie at the heart of the destination product (Clawson & Knetsch, 1966; Vittersø, Vorkinn, Vistad & Vaagland, 2000; Swarbrooke, 2002; Jennings & Nickerson, 2006) and company's (or even destination) viability relies on spotting and managing it accordingly (Richards, 1999). Tourists' overall experience is formed by many small different tourist encounters elements (e.g., receptionists, waiters, public services in the destination), and by various elements of the local attractions such as monuments, archaeological sites, national parks and beaches (Zouni & Kouremenos, 2008). The experience staged at a destination is likely to lead in strong (positive) memories, corresponding psychological arousal, positive perceptions of overall destination quality, and eventually tourist satisfaction (Oh, Fiore & Jeoung, 2007), which is a tourist's emotional state of mind after an experience (Baker & Crompton, 2000). Although experience is of utmost importance in tourism industry, most of the academics in the field stress that tourism experience has been under-researched (Connell & Meyer, 2004; Larsen, 2007). In line with Larsen (2007) and Connell & Meyer (2004), Buhalis (2000) states that there are few textbooks examining destination marketing (see Goodall & Ashworth, 1988; Heath & Wall, 1991; Gartrell, 1994; Pike, 2015) and even fewer treat destinations as an experience provider for tourists and locals (Ryan, 1991, 1997; Getz & Jamal, 1994; Korca, 1998; Lawson, Williams, Young, & Cossens, 1998; Mason & Cheyne, 2000, Andriotis, 2000, 2002) or other destination stakeholders (e.g. , Saleh & Ryan, 1991; Fyall et al., 2007).

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### 3.8.3. BRAND IMAGE- IDEAL AND FAVOURITE PRODUCTS

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In an era of myriad marketing messages for a huge variety of competing options, a brand must differentiate and create a special and unique connection with the consumer that leads to favourable marketing outcomes. Successful brands can create and maintain a positive relationship with consumers via building a favourable brand image (Keller, 1993). Brand image is consumers' perceptions that are associated with a particular brand (Keller, 1993). Brand image is described as the set of all consumers' memory associations linked to a brand (Aaker, 1991). Aaker (1994) posits that brand image builds brand value for at least five reasons:

- a) it facilitates the consumer to process information about the product
- b) it differentiates the product as well as its positioning



- c) it provides reasons to consumers in order to purchase the brand
- d) it tends to create a positive feeling towards the brand
- e) it allows for brand extensions.

Previous academic studies have considered brand image as an antecedent to brand love (e.g., Ismail & Spinelli, 2012; Sallam, 2014). Academics have found positive and significant effect of brand image on brand love and thus they support that there is a strong relationship between brand image and brand love (e.g., Aaker, 1997; Fournier, 1998; Ismail & Spinelli, 2012; Unal & Aydın, 2013; Bozbay, Karami & Arghashi, 2018).

Consumers' favourite brands can be irreplaceable because of their valuable personal possessions (Kretz, 2015). The global approach of Brand engagement in self-concept (BESC) denotes a general tendency of some consumers to associate themselves with their favourite brands and construe their self-concept in terms of their favourite brands (Sprott, Czellar & Spangenberg, 2009). Consumers with high levels of brand engagement in self-concept tend to include favourite brands in themselves and have high levels of prominence for those brands in their memory (Sprott, Czellar & Spangenberg, 2009). Huang, Mitchell and Rosenaum-Elliott (2012) found a strong relationship between consumer personality and the personality of consumers' favourite brands. Consumers who see themselves reflected in a brand, foster a favourable image towards the brand (Cho & Fiore, 2015). Moreover, consumers seem to be committed to their favourite brands and receive enjoyment from them (Cho & Fiore, 2015). In the study of Cho and Fiore (2015), a few interviewees claimed that they love a brand, as it reflects their desired ideal self-image and future desires, and they reckon that their personality is closely connected to that brand image.

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#### 3.8.4. DESTINATION IMAGE- IDEAL AND FAVOURITE DESTINATIONS

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Numerous academics in the tourism field have acknowledged that tourism destinations must be encompassed in the consumers' evoked set, from which an ultimate decision is made (Clark & McCleary, 1995; Leisen, 2001; Cai et al., 2004; Tasci & Kozak, 2006; Qu, Kim & Im, 2011). These days tourists are surrounded by vast destination choices that offer similar attributes such as quality accommodations, unique scenery and nature, good food, unique attractions, and/or friendly people.



Thus, even though a tourism destination need to be encompassed in the tourist's evoked set, it is not enough. Instead, a tourism destination must be unique and differential in order to be chosen as an ultimate decision (Qu, Kim & Im, 2011).

Destination branding is a powerful marketing tool and crucial for a tourism destination to be identified and differentiated from other similar destinations in the minds of the target tourism market, because of fierce competition, product and service similarity, as well as substitutability in tourism markets (Usakli & Baloglu, 2010; Qu, Kim & Im, 2011). The concept of destination image can be perceived as a pre-existing concept corresponding to that of destination branding (Pike, 2009; Qu, Kim & Im, 2011). Understanding the perceptions of tourists about destinations constitutes a fundamental basis to marketing a destination (Litvin & Ling, 2001).

Destination image has been described in various ways in the tourism literature (Litvin & Ling, 2001). Destination image can be described as the overall tourist's perception of the destination that is created by processing information from numerous sources over time (Assael, 1984) and it powerfully affects tourist behaviour (e.g., Pearce 1982). According to Baloglu and McCleary (1999: 870), destination image is "*an attitudinal construct consisting of an individual's mental representation of knowledge (beliefs), feelings, and global impression about an object or destination*".

Moreover, destination image can be perceived as the "*perceptions about the place as reflected by the associations held in tourist memory*" (Cai, 2002: 723). Tasci, Gartner, and Cavusgil (2007: 200) defined destination image as "*an interactive system of thoughts, opinions, feelings, visualizations, and intentions toward a destination*", including cognitive, affective, and conative elements and influencing the purchase decision process (Prayag & Ryan, 2012). Furthermore, according to Kotler, Haider and Rein (1993) as well as Crompton and Lamb (1986) destination image is the sum of one's beliefs, ideas and impressions. Additionally, MacKay & Fesenmaier (1997: 538) described destination image as "*tourist's total impression which is formed as a result of the evaluation of various destination elements' and attributes whereby differences in meaning, number and importance of dimensions may occur*".

Moreover, Milman and Pizam (1995) have described destination image as the tourists' visual or mental impression of a destination. The same academics also posited that different tourists form different images, determined by their progression through three stages of awareness: (a) no awareness, (b) awareness and (c) familiarity



via trial. They concluded that tourists who are familiar with the destination have more positive image about it, while awareness versus non-awareness did not found to be correlated. Tourists usually feel more comfortable with more familiar, and close to them, destinations (Hales & Shams, 1991). Thus, even though they may have formed an image of their ideal destination, they will not always search for it, when it comes to selection (Hales & Shams, 1991). Familiarity is a crucial factor of destination attractiveness. The more familiar a destination is to tourists, the more attractive it becomes (Hebb, 1966). On the other hand, Telisman-Kosuta (1989) posits that the distance tourists have from a destination and the image held of it are positively correlated.

According to Gartner (1996) destination image influences destination selection and destinations with positive images have more chances to be chosen by tourists (Pearce, 1982; Woodside & Lysonski, 1989; Alhemoud & Armstrong, 1996). Gunn (1972, 1988) broke the image formation process into component parts. In 1972, he suggested that a tourist's experience process is based on seven different stages showing an imagery modification process. This entails the agglomeration of mental images concerning the holiday experience (first stage), adjustment of those images by further information (second stage), the decision to go on holidays (third stage), travel to the destination (fourth stage), participation at the destination (fifth stage), return journey (sixth stage) and new collection of images based on the tourist experience (seventh stage). The same author supported that a tourism destination image can be adapted or altered over the seven stages. Gunn (1988) also claimed that destination images can be categorized into organic and induced. Tourists' organic destination image is shaped by non-tourism market-oriented information, deriving from secondary sources, such as newspapers, books and periodicals, whereas a second, higher level of tourist image (induced destination image) is shaped through marketing efforts such as advertising and promotions (Gunn, 1972, 1988; Fakeye & Crompton, 1991; Crompton et al., 1992).

Echtner and Ritchie (1993) argue that destination image is one of the most crucial factors of positioning and it is acknowledged that an efficient positioning strategy is fundamental for marketing tourism services or/and products. Crompton (1979) found that the further away people live from a destination, the more favourable are their images of that place as a holiday destination.



A composite destination image held by a (potential) tourist/traveller is the sum of destination's attributes (Gartner, 1986). Kotler and colleagues (1993) claimed that the majority of tourist destinations have a mixed image, a conglomeration of both positive as well as negative elements, even though some tourist destinations have a purely positive image and some others a negative image. The same authors (Kotler et al., 1993) also proposed that a destination does not have to correct all of its weaknesses or accentuate all of its strengths, since not all destination attributes are perceived as equally important by all tourists. Instead, different tourists perceive different destination attributes as crucial for them. Hence it is important for the marketers of a destination to understand which destination attributes are most likely to affect the perceptions and behaviour (e.g., purchase decisions) of destination's target market through effective marketing strategies (Davidoff, 1994). The total destination image is predominantly determined by two major factors: personal factors and stimulus (destination) factors (Crompton, 1979; MacKay & Fesenmaier, 1997; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Gallarza, Saura & García, 2002). By incorporating the push and pull theory (Dann, 1981, 1996), the push or person determined image factors entail psychological factors, such as values, motivations, personality as well as social factors (age, education, marital status) (Pikkemaat, 2004). Crompton, Fakeye & Lue (1992) suggested the following push factors: escape from pressures (e.g., rest my body, get rid of some anxieties, relax physically, experience tranquillity, explore and evaluate myself), social interaction (e.g., to be with my friends, to be with people who have similar interests), enjoy the natural environment (e.g., to enjoy the smells and the sounds of the nature, to enrich myself intellectually, to enjoy the serenity there, to explore new and different things), seeking warm weather (e.g., because the temperature would be nice there, because there is warmer than in my home), escape from crowds (to get away from crowds of people/ crowded situations for a while), family togetherness (e.g., to visit relatives/ to try to bring my family together more). The pull or destination determined image factors outline the influence of external stimulus and physical objects as well as previous experiences (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; as referred to Pikkemaat, 2004:89). Crompton, Fakeye & Lue (1992) also proposed the following pull factors: quality of life (e.g., friendly people, low traffic congestion, ample local information), natural ambiance (e.g., attractive scenery, pleasant weather, relaxing atmosphere, beautiful beaches, greenery and parks),





cultural opportunities and attractions (e.g., plentiful array of events/concerts/cultural sites), transportation and accommodation (e.g., good car rental and buses facilities, good apartments/rooms), shopping and recreation (e.g., good shopping centers, a wide variety of recreational activities/ food), and evening entertainment (e.g., a variety of good bars/nightlife possibilities).

Destination image is also explained in terms of attribute based and holistic elements (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991). According to Prayag and Ryan (2012), the former concerns destination characteristics (e.g., local cuisine), acknowledged as cognitive images, while the latter concerns mental pictures or place imagery based on both cognitive (e.g., safe for family) and affective images (e.g., enjoyable experience).

Destination attributes can be tangible (functional and directly observable/measurable) or intangible (psychological and difficult to observe/measure). Hence it can be assumed for all the above mentioned that destination attributes/characteristics can influence tourist's destination choice as well as his/her satisfaction and consequently possibly his/her love for destination. Up until now, the majority of destinations focus their marketing efforts on the promotion of their similar characteristics such as beautiful scenery, golden beaches, blue seas, or friendly places (Ekinici, Sirakaya-Turk & Baloglu, 2007; Murphy, Benckendorff, & Moscardo, 2007a; Usakli & Baloglu, 2010).

However, tourists can find many destinations with these attributes and thus it does not longer help differentiate them from their competitors. Positioning tourism places based on their functional features makes them easily substitutable (Usakli & Baloglu, 2010). Therefore, destinations, which evoke unique emotions and experiences as well as set the stage for creating long term emotional bonding and more specifically love relationships with tourists, can craft a unique and distinctive identity.

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#### 3.8.4.1. IDEAL DESTINATION IMAGE

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Mayo (1975) proposed three basic important attributes of holiday destinations in tourists' mindset: (1) scenery, (2) congestion, and (3) climate. According to Mayo an ideal destination for the majority of tourists includes a great deal of scenery; a very comfortable climate; and no congestion (either with people or industry, though neither sparsely populated). These three destination attributes were generally in line with the





work of Anderssen and Colberg (1973), who suggested that the dominant destination attributes are cost, climate, and scenery.

Ross (1993) studied the ideal and actual images of tourists as it concerns to Northern Australia and he found that high levels of ideal destination images were evident on the friendliness of local residents, high quality tourist information and easily available accommodation (Kim & Morrision, 2005). On the other hand, actual destination images were occurred on the diverse physical environment, friendly local residents and the destination's authenticity (Kim & Morrision, 2005). Ross (1993) concluded that there was a difference between the ideal and actual images of north Australia as a tourism destination. Moreover, Andreu Bigne and Cooper (2000) studied whether there are differences between projected and perceived images of Spain in the British market. They empirically found that there are differences between projected and perceived images. More specifically, the projected image of a tourism destination is transmitted through tourism marketing efforts such as promotion or advertising as well as news and information about the destination, whereas perceived image is created from previous knowledge and direct experience (Kim & Morrision, 2005).

Images can fluctuate through the actual travel experiences of tourists with a destination, the amount and kind of information or marketing efforts (e.g., promotion), changes in the environments (e.g, social or political), as well as the number of visits (Pearce, 1982; Phelps, 1986; Chon, 1991; Fakeye & Crompton, 1991; Hu & Ritchie, 1993; Ross, 1993; Andreu et al., 2000), since image formation is a dynamic process (Perry et al. 1976; Pearce, 1982; Gartner, 1986; Schreyer & Beaulieu, 1986; Chon, 1991; Gartner & Shen, 1992; Kim & Morrision, 2005). Other factors that can directly or indirectly affect the perceived image of a tourism destination include sociodemographic characteristics (Stabler, 1988; Jenkins, 1999) such as nationality (MacKay & Fesenmaier, 2000; Kozak, 2002), as well as the level of awareness about familiarity with a tourism destination (Baloglu, 2001; Andsager & Drzewiecka, 2002), and the role of promotional media (Gunn, 1972; Jenkins, 1999). In addition, Kim & Morrision (2005) found that the overall image of a tourism destination varies much over time. Specific well known tourist destinations, such as Venice, Las Vegas, New York, and Paris have invested a lot to build their image as iconic/ideal destinations to the extent that their toponym alone can elicit place-like associations in the mindset of potential or/and actual tourists (Medway & Warnaby,



2014). In fact , there are many tourists who have never visited such ideal/ iconic places with strong toponyms, but actually love them and more specifically love what they stand for (as represented through cinema, music, photographs etc) or their “brand” values, so much that they wish to visit them (Swanson, 2015).

The destination images consist of attributes such as the natural and cultural amenities (e.g., beautiful parks, attractive scenery, plentiful cultural and historical sites), social opportunities and amenities (e.g., plentiful array of festivals), climate, accommodation and transportation facilities (eg., good bus system), infrastructure, food and friendly people of a destination, physical amenities and recreation activities (e.g., wide variety of activities, relaxing atmosphere) as well as bars/ evening entertainment (Fakeye & Crompton, 1991) and friendly service staff (Litvin & Ling, 2001). Destination attributes are likely to contribute to successful tourism development as well as to the formation of tourist’s -destination loving relationship. Moreover, according to Botha et al. (1999) ideal destination can include the following attributes: entertainment (e.g., wide variety of entertainment, recreational activities), infrastructure (e.g., high quality staff, friendly employees, good accommodation, good transportation system, safety), physical environment (e.g., pleasant weather, attractive scenery, relaxing atmosphere). According to Botha et al. (1999) and based on previous academic literature (Lee & Crompton, 1992; Manfredi, Driver & Tarrant, 1996; Crompton & McKay, 1997) there are eight personal motivation dimensions that describe the benefits visitors receive at their ideal destination; escape personal/social pressures (e.g., give my mind a rest, release build-up tension), social recognition/prestige (e.g., do something that impresses others, be thought more highly of by others for doing this, take pictures an exotic place to show friends), socialization/bonding (e.g., interaction with family/friends, being with people who enjoy what I do), self-esteem (e.g., ideal destination increased my feelings of self-worth, helped me feel like a better person, derived a feeling of accomplishment), learning/discover (e.g., from ideal destination gained/discovered something new, satisfied my curiosity), regression (e.g., act like a teenager again, engaged in “wild” behaviour), novelty/thrill (e.g., ideal destination provided a sense of adventure, engaged in some “daring” activities, there I enjoyed activities that provided a thrill), escape from crowds (e.g., get away from the hustle and bustle of the city, felt free, get away from crowded situations).



### 3.8.5. TOURIST MOTIVATION TO TRAVEL

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Motivation constitutes a crucial determinant of consumer behavior, along with cultural, personal as well as social influences, which also have an important influence on consumer purchases (Hudson, 2008). Why people travel and which factors influence their behavioral intention to visit a holiday destination? According to Yoon & Uysal (2005: 45) *“people travel because they are “pushed” into making travel decisions by internal, psychological forces, and “pulled” by the external forces of the destination attributes”*.

Tourism industry has become fiercely competitive (Hui, Wan & Ho, 2007) and thus it becomes crucial that the destination marketing initiatives should be based on a thorough analysis of tourist’s travel motivation (Yoon and Uysal, 2005) in order to be successful (Van der Merwe, Slabbert & Saayman, 2011).

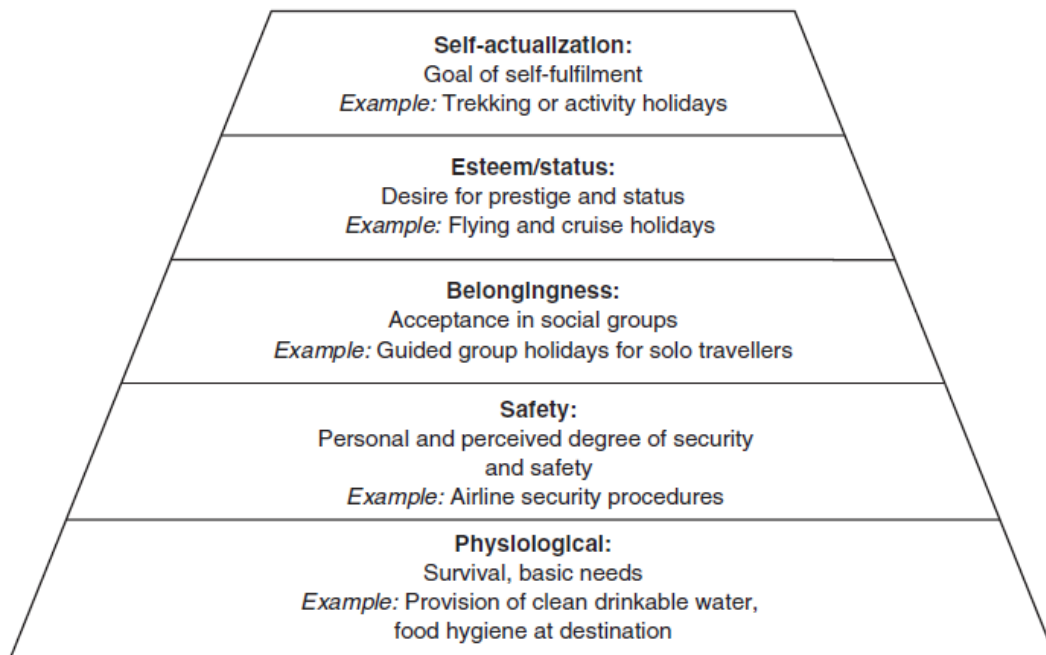
Motivation is an inner drive that causes an individual to act in a certain way in order to satisfy the psychological/biological desired needs and wants, entailing integral forces that stimulate, direct and amalgamate a tourist’s behavior and activity (Dann, 1981; Pearce, 1982; Uysal & Hagan, 1993; Beerli & Martin, 2004; Hudson, 2008; Van der Merwe, Slabbert & Saayman, 2011).

*“Understanding consumer motivation is one of the most effective ways of gaining competitive differential advantage”* (Hudson, 2008: 41). According to Berkman & Gilson (1986:353) motivation is *“the dynamic aspect of the phenomenon of personality, or the particular set of traits that characterize an individual. In other words, motivation links personality with action”*. In addition, motivation can be seen as *“the driving force behind all behavior”* (Fodness, 1994 :555). Motivation in tourism *“acts as a trigger that sets of all events involved in travel. In other words it represents the whys and wherefores of travel in general or of a specific choice in particular”* (Parrinello, 1993: 233).

Kotler (1982) fathoms that motivations can be conceived as the outcome of internal and external stimuli. Internal stimuli stem from personal needs that can be physiological, social, egocentric, safety and self-actualization (Joynathsing & Ramkissoon, 2010). This theory lies with Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs (1943), which includes five levels of human motivation, namely Physiological needs, Safety, Belonging, Esteem or Respect and Self-actualization. Focal to most content motivation theories is the concept of need (Hudson, 2008). Needs can be perceived as

the forces that arouse motivated behavior and understanding individuals' motivation is essential to unravel individuals' needs and how they can be fulfilled (Hudson, 2008).

Figure 6: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943)



Source: Maslow, A. H. (1943) 'A theory of human motivation', *Psychological Review*, 50, 370–396, as cited in Hudson (2008: 42).

All tourists have a spectrum of needs and aspirations spanning from basic physical/physiological needs for food, warmth, shelter and sleep, through safety and social needs for affection and love, to belongingness, self-esteem and status needs (Middleton & Clarke, 2002; Holloway, 2004; Hudson, 2008). For example, cultural as well as academic traveling (e.g., conferences) may give individuals prestige in the eyes of their acquaintances. Tourists' social needs for loving and belonging are frequently met via organized groups, since many tourists find package holiday tours an excellent way to make new friends or seek romance (Holloway, 2004). For instance, cruises fulfill this social need well. The most advanced level of tourists' needs is the inner-directed need for self-actualization (Middleton & Clarke, 2002; Holloway, 2004; Hudson, 2008). In developed countries, these higher inner-directed needs or aspirations are the main travel motivators (Middleton et al., 2009).



The majority of the academics (e.g., Dann, 1977; Crompton, 1979; Uysal & Hagan, 1993; Uysal & Jurowski, 1994; Fodness, 1994; Uysal, McGehee & Loker-Murphy, 1996; Heung, Qu & Chu, 2001; Kozak, 2002; Klenosky, 2002; Lubbe, 2003; Hallab, Yoon & Uysal, 2003; Awaritefe, 2004; Yoon & Uysal, 2005; Jönsson & Devonish, 2008) have suggested that there are two factors that motivate people to travel namely “push” and “pull” factors .

The “push” travel motivation factors refer to internal forces that push a person from his/her home and create him/her a desire to travel somewhere else. Socio-psychological motives constitute the intrinsic motivations that push a person to travel. Such socio-psychological motives can be the desire for escape routine, need for rest and relaxation, search for authentic/unique experiences, prestige, boost health and fitness, adventure seeking and social interaction, family togetherness, as well as excitement (Crompton, 1979; Yoon & Uysal, 2005).

“Pull” travel motivation factors allure the person toward a destination due to its situation/region as well as the perceived attractiveness of the destination (Joynathsing & Ramkissoon, 2010). Pull factors are the specific destination characteristics that serve as attraction for the tourist and these factors are crucial in tourists’ destination choice (Crompton, 1979; Awaritefe, 2004). Pull travel motivation factors include man-made attractions (e.g., infrastructure), natural/cultural/ historical attractions, climate, beaches, recreation facilities, entertainment, shopping, and parks. (Sirakaya, 1992; Baloglu & Uysal, 1996; Yoon & Uysal, 2005). According to Lubbe (2003), pull factors can be divided into three categories : (1) primary pull factors, such as scenery, cities, climate, wildlife, historical and local cultural attractions; (2) secondary pull factors, such as accommodation, catering, entertainment, sports and (3) tertiary pull factors, such as marketing.

Crompton (1979) suggested nine travel motives: seven push motives (e.g., escape from a perceived mundane environment, exploration and evaluation of self, relaxation, prestige, enhancement of kinship relationship, regression, facilitation of social interaction) and two pull motives (novelty and education).

Uysal, McGehee and Loker-Murphy (1996) proposed five push travel motives (e.g., sports and adventure, cultural experience, family and kinship, prestige, escape) and six pull travel motives (e.g., heritage and culture, recreational activities, comfort and relaxation, outdoor resources, resort enclave, and budgetary environs).



Uysal and Jurowski (1993) determined four push travel motives (cultural experience, re-experiencing family togetherness, escape and sports) and four pull travel motives (entertainment/resort, outdoor/nature, heritage/culture and rural/inexpensive areas). Heung, Qu and Chu (2001) established five push and pull motives (exploration, dream fulfillment, benefits sought, cosmopolitan city as well as attractions and climate).

Kim, Lee and Klenosky (2003) found four push travel motivation factors, namely (1) family togetherness and study, for instance have enjoyable time with family, have time for natural study for children, observe rare wildlife, appreciate historic/cultural resources, (2) appreciating natural resources and health, for instance enjoy and appreciate natural resources, enhance health, (3) escaping from everyday routine, for instance take a rest, get away from everyday life, avoid hot weather, (4) enjoy adventure and friendship building, and three pull travel motivation factors, namely (1) key tourist resources, such as rare fauna and flora, tranquil rest areas, beautiful natural resources, cultural and historic resources (2) information and convenience of facilities, such as well-organized tourist information system, convenient parking lots and facilities (e.g., restrooms, drinking stands), clean and comfortable accommodations, and (3) accessibility and transportation (easy accessibility and convenient transportation).

Awaritefe (2004) categorized the push travel motivation factors as Cultural/Education needs, Need for environment change or physiological-tension reducing, Self-actualization and Belonging/love. Furthermore, Awaritefe (2004) stated that people are motivated to travel by their need of Self-improvement in an appreciative cultural or educational context and leisure/recreational pursuits (Joynathsing & Ramkissoon, 2010). Moreover, Awaritefe (2004) classified pull travel motives as domestic with emphasis on favorable location, facilities/amenities, access to centers, cost satisfaction, quality services as well as good accommodation (as cited in Joynathsing & Ramkissoon, 2010:5).

Yoon and Uysal (2005) found eight push travel motivation factors: (1) exciting, for example finding thrills and excitement, being physically active, meeting people of opposite sex, rediscovering myself (2) knowledge/education, for example experiencing new/different lifestyles, trying new food, visiting historical places, meeting new people (3) relaxation, (4) achievement, for example going to places that friends have not been, talking about the trip, rediscovering past good times (5) family





togetherness, for example visiting relatives/friends, being together as a family, visiting places my family came from (6) escape, for example getting away from the demands at home, experiencing a simpler lifestyle (7) safety/fun, for example feeling safe and secure, being entertained and having fun and (8) away from home and seeing, for example feeling at home while being away from home, seeing as much as possible and nine pull travel motivation factors: (1) modern atmospheres and activities, for example modern cities, exotic atmosphere, casino and gambling, live theaters/concerts, first class hotels (2) wide space and activities, for example variety of activities, wide spaces to get away from crowds, budget accommodation (3) small size and reliable weather, for example manageable size, reliable weather, personal safety (4) natural scenery, for example outstanding scenery (5) different culture, for example interesting and friendly local people, historic old cities, quality beach (6) cleanness and shopping, (7) night life and local cuisine, (8) interesting town and village and (9) water activities.

Firstly the tourist decide the trip, and afterwards where to go, what to see, and what to do (destination-specific), thus push factors precede pull factors (Dann, 1981). Push and pull factors are addressed to two different and distinct decisions made at two different points in time- one focusing on whether to go, the other on where to go (Klenosky, 2002). However, some other academics state that push and pull motivational factors are not completely independent from each other but fundamentally related to each other, since internal forces push individuals to travel, but simultaneously the external destination forces pull them to choose that specific destination (Cha, McCleary & Uysal, 1995; Uysal & Jurowski, 1994; Kim, Lee & Klenosky, 2003).

Pull travel motivation factors respond to and boost inherent push travel motivation factors (Heung, Qu & Chu, 2001; Sangpikul, 2008). Push and pull travel motivation factors outline how persons are pushed by motivation elements into making travel decisions and how they are pulled or allured by destination characteristics (Uysal & Hagan, 1993).

Yoon and Uysal (2005) claim that the effects as well as the outcomes of the travel motivation studies of tourist behavior necessitate more than a comprehension of their needs and wants. The knowledge of travel motivations and its application in destination marketing strategies could give insights into the emotions tourists assign





and develop in destinations, as well as ameliorate competitiveness in the tourism market (Heath, Jonker & Du Toit, 2004; Pike, 2005), guarantee long-term profit, survival, and growth of tourism destinations (Saayman, 2006).

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### 3.8.6. TOURISTS' TRAVEL BEHAVIOUR, DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC ATTRIBUTES ON DESTINATION LOVE

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#### 3.8.6.1. DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS ON LOVE

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In tourism research and in the investigation of travel behaviour, socio-demographic characteristics have been associated with behaviour (e.g. Wang, He, & Leung, 2018). Although there are many and diverse factors as well as approaches in the broad field of tourism research, demographics appear to be the most common determinants to study travel behaviour (Hassana & Hashimb, 2017). Nevertheless, some researchers have considered them as insufficient factors of tourist behaviour (e.g., Tkaczynski & Rundle-Thiele, 2011). Notably, these variables are still considered as more impartial and assessable than the unnoticed variables (Zouni & Kouremenos, 2008; Wang, He & Leung, 2018). In recent years, academics across various disciplines have tried to investigate and give insights into the impact of culture - including the socio-demographic characteristics- and ethnicity on the emotion of love (Doherty, Hatfield, Thompson, & Choo, 1994). As love constitutes a subjective notion, it is found to be highly dependent on individual, socio-demographic and cultural factors (Hong, 1986; Christou, 2018). Jankowiak and Fischer (1992) provide strong evidence that romantic love is (nearly) universal across different cultures and ethnicities.

On the contrary, Stone (1988) highlights that romantic love is perceived differently across different cultures and societies. In relation to gender and love, no gender differences generally were found in research conducted during the 1980s (e.g., Hendrick & Hendrick, 1986), as well as 90's (Doherty et al., 1994) but they have appeared in more recent years (e.g., Regan, 2016). Previous research demonstrates a clear pattern with respect to the association between age and endorsement of an 'agapic' love style (e.g., Butler, Walker, Skowronski, & Shannon, 1995; Lin & Huddleston-Casas, 2005), showing that individuals who are emotionally mature and



generally 'older' tend to develop love emotions (Lee, 1977; Steptoe, Deaton, & Stone, 2015).

Moreover, research proves that more educated individuals would potentially have psychological access to more advanced and committed relationships (Elder & Rockwell, 1979) in different contexts (e.g., Jr J. W. Carland, Carland, & Carland, 1995). On the contrary, no previous research can be found to correlate love development with higher income. It must be noted that income is related with higher educational level and age in tourism (Kivela & Crofts, 2005; Björk & Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2016). Finally, to the extent of my knowledge no research has been carried out on love and emotions in relation to marital status in tourism context, and only scarce research has been found in psychology in general. However, a study in the field of psychology (Taormina & Gao, 2013) showed that satisfaction of the self-actualization needs had positive correlations with marital status.

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#### 3.8.6.2. FIRST TIME VERSUS REPEAT VISITORS

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Given that travel behavior is affected by numerous factors, including past experience (e.g., Dolnicar, Coltman, & Sharma, 2015), first-time visitors and repeat visitors differ in their behavioral pattern while being on vacations and hold different emotional connections with destinations (e.g., Lau & McKercher, 2004; Caber, 2015). More specifically, first-time visitors are new consumers, who are exploring a destination for the first time and thus, they are plausible to visit more attractions, search for variety and excitement, spend more on lodging, and be more active. On the other hand, repeat visitors represent a stable source of tourist revenue, they are familiar with the destination and satisfied with the experiences offered, and thus they tend to visit fewer attractions, find relaxation, spend more on entertainment and recreation, be more passive, and show stronger intention to re-purchase and act as information channels that informally link networks of friends, acquaintances, and other potential travelers to a destination or use word-of-mouth communication to promote destination and encourage prospective travelers to become visitors (Oppermann, 1997; Fallon & Schofield, 2003; Lau & McKercher, 2004; Shani, Reichel & Croes, 2012; Caber, 2015; Jiang, Potwarka & Havitz, 2017).



In a nutshell, repeat visitors behave more favorably for destinations and represent a highly attractive market segment that is cost-effective, since they are more easily accessible than first-time visitors as organizations usually retain records, making targeted direct marketing more feasible (Lau & McKercher, 2004; Jiang, Potwarka & Havitz, 2017).

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#### 3.8.6.3. LENGTH OF STAY

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Length of stay determines significantly the number of experiences that a tourist can undertake at a destination. (Gokovali, Bahar & Kozak 2007). As a result, length of stay is one of the key elements in a tourist decision making process (Bull, 1995; Decrop & Snelders, 2004) and critical to the design of destination marketing strategy that promote longer stays, associated with higher occupancy rates and revenue streams (Alegre & Pou, 2006). The importance of this variable in tourism has been recently established by several tourism researchers (Alegre & Pou, 2006; Gokovali, Bahar, & Kozak, 2007; Martinez-Garcia & Raya, 2008; Menezes, Moniz, & Vieira, 2010; Alegre, Mateo, & Pou, 2011). Arguably, longer holidays are more likely to produce higher expenditure in tourism goods and services, even if this relationship may not be linear. This implies higher revenues for businesses and multiplier effects within the local economy of the destination. Moreover, length of stay provides useful information in order to evaluate the capability of a specific destination to attract and maintain tourism revenues, and it is a useful indicator for businesses, investors and local institutions in order to plan their policies in the future (Pulina, 2010).

The above discussion leads to one of this study objective that is to identify the segments/ types of tourists that develop different kinds of destination love, in terms of their socio-demographic variables and repeat visitation patterns.

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#### 3.8.7. SATISFACTION

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Even though the majority of firms strive to enhance their customer satisfaction ratings, it is not unlikely that satisfied customers can switch to competitor's brands for a number reasons (Reichheld, 1996). This means that satisfaction alone is not a



sufficient predictor of brand loyalty (Jones & Sasser, 1995), which in turn means that a satisfied consumer do not certainly develop brand love (Roy, Eshghi & Sarkar, 2012).

It should be stressed that satisfaction and love are two distinct constructs. Satisfaction differs from brand love in that satisfaction is considered to be a predominately cognitive judgment (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006), although it entails partly affection (Roy et al., 2012), whereas brand love is perceived an emotion (Fournier & Mick, 1999) and more affective component than satisfaction (Kang, 2015). Two customers can be equally satisfied with the same brand, but their loyalties at the level of love can show discrepancies. Satisfaction is conceived as transaction-specific in contrast to brand love, which is associated with a longer-term brand relationship (Drennan et al., 2015). In other words, once a consumer uses a brand, he/she can become satisfied, but he/she should have a long-term interaction with the brand in order to speak of love (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006). This means that post- consumption cumulative satisfaction over time possibly leads to an emotional bonding with a brand (Thomson et al, 2005; Roy et al., 2012). Brand love is the outcome of a nurtured consumer-brand relationship, which is definitely not a prerequisite for satisfaction (Kang, 2015), as satisfaction can be achieved by means of a one-time interaction with a customer (Unal & Aydin, 2013). Satisfaction constitutes a fundamental basis for the brand love creation (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006), since it settles and enhances the bond between the brand and the consumer (Unal & Aydin, 2013). As this bond gets stronger, brand love is created (Unal & Aydin, 2013). Brand love entails an emotional bond beyond satisfaction for a loyal customer group (Unal & Aydin, 2013). When consumers feel love for a brand, they see it as important and unique and they cannot replace it with other brands (Fournier, 1998). On the other hand, some other academics state that satisfaction is not enough for the consumer to have a long term relationship with the brand. Experienced satisfaction over a longer period can be essential to generate brand love, but the absence of satisfaction does not inhibit the development of brand love (Schlobohm et al., 2016). Hence satisfaction could or could not be perceived an antecedent of brand love. Most importantly, brand love is closely linked to the consumer's identity, entailing an integration of the brand into the self-concept,



denoting its importance in the consumer-brand relationship (Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006; Ahuvia, Batra and Bagozzi, 2008).

On the ground of overall satisfaction, the brand may proceed more softly to cultivate brand love through (1) the caring, attention and responsiveness of the brand; (2) the perceived uniqueness and extraordinariness stemmed from the encounter with the brand; (3) the perceived privilege and special treatment inherent in the service of the brand; (4) the reliability, trustworthiness and integrity manifested by the brand; (5) pleasurable and enjoyable experiences provided by the brand; and (6) identification with the symbolic meaning and image of the brand (Tsai, 2014: 568).

Tourists' satisfaction is an assessment tool for the evaluation of travel experiences (Ross & Iso-Ahola, 1991; Bramwell, 1998; Yoon & Uysal, 2005) and thus it is purely experiential, as it constitutes a psychological state that can only be derived from interaction with the destination (Baker & Crompton, 2000).

However, little is known about how visitors perceive, integrate and extrapolate individual service perceptions and satisfaction from the entire tourist experience (Gyimothy, 2000; Matzler, Renzl & Rothenberger, 2006; Alegre & Cladera, 2009). Most researchers in the tourism field stress that the final evaluation or estimation of tourists' experience at a destination could be regarded as the cumulative sum of individual experiences (Danaher & Mattsson, 1994). As a consequence, most of the academic researches, about satisfaction from destinations, simply assess the effect of individual service encounters on visitors' overall satisfaction (Chon & Olsen, 1991; Danaher & Mattsson, 1994; Danaher & Arweiler, 1996; Huang & Sarigollu, 2008). On the other hand, recent marketing research stresses the idea that overall satisfaction is a greater construct, implying a holistic approach (e.g., Jafari & Richie, 1981; Getz, 1986; Fornell, 1992; Aramberri, 2001). Tourist satisfaction is one of the most important factors of successful destination marketing, and a prerequisite for the development of a strategy leading to a destination's enhanced attractiveness and its competitive positioning. Hence, destination management organizations should be focused on enhancing customer satisfaction (Pearce, 1997; Seaton, 1997; Pritchard & Morgan, 1998). The definition of consumer satisfaction (CS) is not very clear in the literature (Spreng & Mackoy, 1996), but generally can be conceptualized as an



attitudinal judgment about purchase (Yi, 1990). *“In brief, customer satisfaction is a summary of cognitive and affective reaction to a service incident (or sometimes to a long-term service relationship). Satisfaction (or dissatisfaction) results from experiencing a service quality encounter and comparing that encounter with what was expected”* (Oliver, 1980; Rust & Oliver, 1994:2). Moreover, satisfaction is measured by how well leisure activities are perceived to fulfill the basic needs and motives that stimulated the idea to participate in the activity (Crompton & Love, 1995).

There are two general conceptualizations of satisfaction (Boulding, Kalra, Staelin & Zeithaml, 1993; Jones & Suh, 2000). In marketing literature, it has been established that customer satisfaction consists of both transaction specific satisfaction and cumulative satisfaction (Iacobucci, Ostrom & Grayson, 1995). Cumulative satisfaction refers to overall satisfaction with all transactions whereas transactional satisfaction is the result of a specific encounter (Iacobucci et al., 1995). According to Bitner and Hubbert (1994), as well as Jones and Suh (2000), the two general conceptualizations of satisfaction are distinct, but they are more complementary than competing (Johnson, 2001). Transaction-specific satisfaction is *“the consumer dis/satisfaction with a discrete service encounter”*, whereas overall satisfaction is *“the consumer’s overall dis/satisfaction with the organization based on all the encounters and experiences with that particular organization”* (Bitner & Hubbert, 1994: 76-77). It is clear that overall satisfaction is a more general assessment of various service encounters than an instant evaluation of an individual service encounter. For example, a tourist in a Hilton hotel may have low transaction-specific satisfaction because the receptionist in the specific hotel was not helpful enough. On the other hand, his overall satisfaction may still be high because all his previous encounters (e.g., room service, indoor and outdoor facilities) with the specific hotel chain have been pleasant.

Since overall customer satisfaction is accumulated over time, it is considered to be a more reliable measure of overall satisfaction as service quality differs from encounter to encounter, causing variation in transaction-specific satisfaction levels (Jones & Suh, 2000). In tourism literature, several researchers have theoretically argued that



cumulative satisfaction is the most relevant conceptualisation when the focus is on the tourists' evaluation of their overall experience at a destination generally (Pizam, Neumann & Reichel, 1978; Foster, 1999), and in a cultural and heritage destination especially (Al Oun & Al Homoud, 2008). This approach is centred on the idea that a destination offers complex experiences in the form of many sequential service encounters. An ongoing experience of encounters during an entire trip to a certain destination may include different service functions: attractions, transport, accommodation, catering and other activities available on the destination. The above sentence means that although visitors regard an area with all its offerings as one single product before their visit, their overall destination experience evaluation, might be affected by every single service interaction. Indeed, the majority of tourism experience researchers argue that the ultimate assessment of a destination experience could be represented as a "cumulative sum of individual experiences" (Danaher & Mattsson, 1994). Consequently, most of the investigations of tourist satisfaction from destinations simply assess the impact of individual attributes on overall tourist satisfaction (e.g., Chon & Olsen, 1991; Danaher & Arweiler, 1996; Huang & Sarigollu, 2008). In other words, they use to sum up the impact of individual attributes on overall tourist satisfaction with a particular destination. Therefore, in practice, researchers use to equate overall with cumulative satisfaction. However, Spreng, Mackenzie and Olshavsky (1996) assert the importance of distinguishing between overall satisfaction and cumulative satisfaction with individual destination product components, since overall satisfaction is a broader concept, implying a holistic impression (Fornell, 1992). Fuchs and Weiermair (2003) argue that the models, in which destination attributes are regressed or correlated to a variable measuring total satisfaction with the destination, produce more valid managerial implications than models that only employ individual destination attributes.

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### 3.9. OUTCOMES OF LOVE IN MARKETING

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Academics in the marketing and tourism field (e.g., Fournier, 1998; Thomson, MacInnis & Park, 2005; Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006; Albert, Merunka, & Valette-Florence, 2008; Bergkvist & Bech-Larsen, 2010; Batra et al., 2012; Tsai, 2014; Drennan et al., 2015) have proved that brand love predicts and results in favorable





consequences for brands such as brand loyalty, word-of-mouth (WOM) and resistance to negative brand information, better than “*conventional attitude models in marketing that rely on the brand’s perceived high quality*” do (Batra et al., 2012; as cited in Rauschnabel & Ahuvia, 2014: 373).

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### 3.9.1. WORD OF MOUTH

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Word Of Mouth is perceived a person-to-person, informal process of product/service/company related information transferring via verbal or written-eWOM- communication (Arndt, 1967; Harrison-Walker, 2001; Hawkins, Best & Coney, 2004; Wangenheim, 2005; Simpson & Siguaw, 2008; Lo, 2012; Ismail & Spinelli, 2012; Sallam, 2014; Karjaluto, Munnukka & Kiuru, 2016) or in other words the service/product communication flow among consumers (Westbrook, 1987). Word-of-mouth communication is also described as explicit recommendations (e.g., Hartline & Jones, 1996; Fullerton & Taylor, 2002), as an activity that entails sharing thoughts about a commercially-based experience (Westbrook, 1987; Mikkelsen, Van Durme & Carrie, 2003) or as a combination of these two aspects (Swan & Oliver, 1989; Reynolds & Arnold, 2000; Brown, Barry, Dacin & Gunst, 2005). U.S Travel & Tourism Advisory Board (2006: 24) advocates that positive WOM “*is the most powerful form of Marketing*” and creates “*millions of grassroots ambassadors*”. Moreover, WOM is the most powerful way to accelerate decisions (Silverman, 2001) and “*may be more powerful in affecting others’ feelings and behavior than any other type of marketing communication*” (Simpson & Siguaw, 2008: 171). WOM is about consumers’ sharing information and opinions that influence other consumers positively or negatively about particular brands, services and products (Hawkins et al., 2004). Word Of Mouth can be considered an important influencer in consumer decision-making (Nguyen & Romaniuk, 2014), since positive WOM communication rises the possibility of the consumers in selecting or purchasing the product, whereas negative WOM has the opposite results (Sallam, 2014). WOM is very influential and powerful communication channel because of its information unbiased filter of “*people like me*” (Allsop, Bassett & Hoskins, 2007).

Furthermore, positive as well as negative emotions contribute to word-of-mouth transmission (Westbrook, 1987; Sweeney & Soutar, 2001). WOM is a key concept in



emotion research, because it is also considered as an emotional contagion process, since the receiver's emotions can be formed, developed and influenced by that of sender's (Soderlund & Rosengren, 2007). In brand love research, many academics have linked brand love to positive WOM (e.g, Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006; Batra et al., 2012; Fetscherin, 2014; Leventhal, Wallace, Buil & de Chernatony, 2014; Kudeshia et al., 2016; Karjaluoto et al.,

2016). Batra et al. (2012: 10) proved that brand love explains consumers' loyalty, positive WOM and resistance to negative brand information, better than *“conventional attitude models in marketing that rely on the brand's perceived high quality”*.

In tourism, *“information can be treated as one of the most or even the most important factor influencing and determining consumer behavior”* (Maser & Weiermair, 1998: 107). Aro et al. (2018) suggest positive WOM as a consequence of destination brand love.

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### 3.9.2. LOYALTY

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Loyalty is *“a deeply held commitment to re-buy or re-patronize a preferred product/service consistently in the future, thereby causing repetitive same-brand or same brand set purchasing, despite situational influences and marketing efforts having the potential to cause switching behavior”* (Oliver, 1999: 34).

Brand loyalty has been acknowledged as a pivotal driving force and one of the most crucial factors of success in the marketing and tourism literatures (Reichheld & Teal, 1996; Yoon & Uysal, 2005; Sun, Chi & Xu, 2013), as brand success and survival depends on the repurchase (Assael, 1984).

Loyalty has been perceived as a two dimensional construct, including attitudinal and behavioural loyalty (Hwang & Kandampully, 2012). More specifically, attitudinal loyalty refers to the customer's disposition to build some kind of commitment (or even the future purchase) with the brand as well as their attitude towards the brand, encompassing an emotional component (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). On the other hand, behavioural, or purchase loyalty, is defined as customer's willingness to repurchase the same brand or customers' continuous purchases of a brand (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). Oliver (1999) claimed that loyalty is developed via different



phases, which are “(1) a preference over competing brand attributes (beliefs), (2) along with an affective preference (attitude) toward the product, and (3) a greater intention (conation) to purchase the product above and beyond that for competing product offerings” (as cited in Yuksel et al., 2010: 277). Hence, consumers become loyal to a service firstly cognitively, afterwards affectively (e.g., like or dislike of the service), and later conatively (Oliver, 1997; Back, 2005; Yuksel et al., 2010). The consumers’ loyalty and commitment towards the service is built as each of the loyalty stages are passed and is related to different elements of the attitude development structure (Oliver, 1999; Yuksel et al., 2010). At each loyalty phase, different factors affecting loyalty can be revealed (Evanschitzky & Wunderlich, 2006).

Cognitive loyalty is based upon the product information available to the customer, it is predominately affected by the consumer’s evaluative response to experience, and more specifically to the perceived performance of an offering relative to price and it is claimed to be the weakest form of loyalty (Pedersen & Nysveen, 2001; Evanschitzky & Wunderlich, 2006; Yuksel et al., 2010). On the contrary, affective loyalty is based upon consumers’ affect-based attitudes towards a product/brand/service, which subsequently are stemming from an entrenched consumer- product relationship (Yuksel et al., 2010). Affect is more encrypted and stronger in the consumer’s mind than cognition, which is more subjective to counterarguments (Oliver, 1997; Yuksel et al., 2010). Hence consumers’ favorable attitudes towards a product are linked with affective loyalty development (Yuksel et al., 2010). Although affective loyalty is more encoded in consumer’s mind than cognitive loyalty, it is not a perfect predictor of behavioral loyalty (Pedersen & Nysveen, 2001), as consumers could become affectively loyal to various brands in the same category (Yuksel et al, 2010). Conative loyalty is perceived to be the strongest predictor of behavioral loyalty compared to cognitive and affective loyalty (Pedersen & Nysveen, 2001; Yuksel et al., 2010) and it is characterized as consumers’ behavioral intention to keep on using or purchasing the brand in the future (Pedersen & Nysveen, 2001).

Evans, Moutinho and Van Raaij (1996) defined brand loyalty at three particular levels, namely (1) cognitive, (2) attitudinal and (3) behavioral. More specifically, at the cognitive level, consumer’s loyalty is characterized as “*an internal commitment to purchase and repurchase a particular brand*” (Evans et al., 1996: 261), at the attitudinal level, the consumer shows a preference to use or purchase a specific brand



and at behavioural level consumer's loyalty is shown as repeat purchases of a specific brand. The same academics stress that any habitual brand purchases must have originally stemmed from cognitive processes and thus the existence of "pure" behavioural loyalty can be questioned (Evans et al., 1996). In general, loyalty denotes any aspect of repetitive purchase behavior or buying pattern (Uncles & Laurent, 1997; Niininen & Riley, 2004). Numerous academics have acknowledged the importance of loyalty, since it has been proved to decrease customer recruitment costs, customer price sensitivity and servicing costs (Krishnamurthi & Raj, 1991; Allenby & Lenk, 1995).

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#### 3.9.2.1. TOURISM DESTINATION LOYALTY

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Regardless of the boundless acknowledgment that loyalty is a pivotal force in successful companies, tourism destination loyalty has not been extensively investigated (Oppermann, 2000) until recently that has turned out to be one of the most appealing topics examined within the tourism and hospitality literatures (e.g., see Gursoy, Chen & Chi, 2014; Meleddu, Paci & Pulina, 2015). Loyalty constitutes a crucial element of destination marketing and tourism management research due to fierce competition and increasing recognition of the importance of loyal visitors (Lee, 2003).

Within the tourism literature, destination loyalty is defined as the degree of a tourist's willingness to recommend a destination (Chen & Gursoy, 2001), or the level of a tourist's repeat visitation (Gitelson & Crompton 1984; Fakeye & Crompton 1991; Oppermann, 2000) as well as a tourist's intention to return to the specific destination (Ostrowski, O'Brien & Gordon, 1993).

The key reasons for a tourist to become a loyal visitor of a destination (repeat visits) are based on the relaxation seeking, as these tourists are more likely to revisit the same holiday destination (Gitelson & Crompton, 1984; Pyo Song & Chang, 1998), as well as the familiarity with the particular destination, the chance to decrease the perceived holiday risk, to contact or meet like-minded people, to establish an emotional bond towards the destination and to further explore the destination alone or with relatives/friends (Cook & McCleary, 1983; Etzel & Wahlers, 1985; Niininen & Riley, 2004). Loyal visitors aim for



a relaxing holiday, whereas first time visitors seek for variety and want to explore as much as they can (Pyo et al., 1998).

Researchers to date have conceived of loyalty from a behavioral angle, an attitudinal approach or as a composite of the two (Jacoby & Chestnut, 1978; Zhang, Fu, Cai & Lu, 2014). The behavioral approach concentrates on tourists' consumptive behavior, for example, the frequency of repeat visitation, and it is characterized as sequence purchase, proportion of patronage or likelihood of purchase (Oppermann, 2000; Yoon & Uysal, 2005), and the attitudinal is connected with tourists' psychological commitments such as revisit intention and willingness to recommend the destination to others (Yoon & Uysal, 2005; Zhang et al., 2014). A composite approach involves that neither attitudinal nor the behavioral loyalty approach alone completely captures loyalty (Backman & Crompton, 1991; Zhang et al., 2014). In particular, attitudes have been shown to relate to behavior, in spite of the fact that it is important to emphasize that one tourist may demonstrate a positive attitude towards a destination but not return to it because of comparable or greater attitudinal extremity toward others destinations (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Chen, Shang & Li, 2014). Consequently, as recommended by several researchers (e.g., Gursoy et al., 2014; Zhang et al., 2014) destination loyalty should be simultaneously considered from both behavioral and attitudinal approaches.

Behavioral loyalty can be perceived as visitors' repeated attendance in particular activities and usage of facilities and services (Chiang, 2016) and it implies that previous experiential familiarity affects present and future tourism decisions, especially destination choice (Konecnik & Gartner, 2007). Gitelson and Crompton (1984) claimed that numerous destinations depend heavily on repeat visitations. Opperman (2000) argued that destination loyalty should be examined longitudinally, observing lifelong tourists' visitation behavior. Hence behavioral loyalty can be implemented as a reasonable or good predictor of tourists' future destination choice (Konecnik & Gartner, 2007).

Attitudinal loyalty is considered as visitors' favorable attitudes toward a particular product, service or destination as well as their intention to rebuy, revisit it and recommend it to other potential tourists (Bigne, Sanchez &



Sanchez, 2001; Chen & Myagmarsuren, 2010; Zhang et al., 2014; Chiang, 2016). Any tourist with a favorable attitude toward a destination, although he/she may not visit it again, may still give positive recommendations to other people (Konecnik & Gartner, 2007). Due to the significant role of positive word of mouth (Gitelson & Crompton, 1983; Gartner, 1994), this aspect of loyalty appears very crucial (Konecnik & Gartner, 2007).

Both aspects of loyalty (behavioral and attitudinal) could be incorporated into a composite measurement (Konecnik & Gartner, 2007). The composite approach of loyalty encompasses both attitudinal and behavioral aspects of loyalty and suggests that visitors who show behavioral loyalty towards a specific destination tend to have a positive attitude toward this destination (Zhang et al., 2014). Tourists' revisit intention and recommendations to other potential tourists such as friends, family and acquaintances are the most frequently used measures for tourist loyalty (Oppermann, 2000; Yoon & Uysal, 2005; Alcañiz, García & Blas, 2009; Hung & Petrick, 2012; Horng, Liu, Chou & Tsai, 2012; Zhang et al., 2014).

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## SYNOPSIS

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Overall, from the literature review on love some major theoretical and methodological gaps emerged and this dissertation aspires to fill them. In particular, this research effort aspires to give insights into how love is actually described, felt, manifested and experienced by tourists in a variety of different tourism destinations (universal research approach), it highlights the essential role of destination love in marketing and tourism literatures as well as enhances the comprehension of the emotional relationships that are developed between people and places. This dissertation is focused on love for tourism destinations, by defining and operationalizing destination love, as well as exploring which tourists' segments develop each type of love regarding tourism destinations. In addition, this study aspires to shed more light on the debate concerning the procedure that consumer research usually explains brand love phenomena using interpersonal love approaches (Batra, Bagozzi & Ahuvia, 2012; Langner et al., 2015), by introducing and examining for the first time those notions in relation to destination love.



The main objective of this dissertation, emerged from the literature review, is to explore and develop both theoretically and empirically the novel concept of *destination love*.

Despite the plenty of academic work analyzing antecedents and outcomes of customers' brand love (e.g., satisfaction, loyalty and WOM), an integrative quantitative model that combines tourists' destination love with satisfaction, and WOM remains absent from the tourism literature. This study fills this gap and examines their relationships quantitatively (see Chapter 5, nomological validity (5.4.2.3)). By defining and examining destination love and its (causal) relationship with variables, such as tourist satisfaction, word of mouth, as well as demographic, socioeconomic, behavioral and psychographic characteristics of tourists, among others, can provide more accurate insights to destination marketers as well as a rather unexplored research domain to the scholars. Identifying the profile of tourists who develop destination love as well as each type of destination love (see Chapters 4, 6 and 7) can help marketers gain a better understanding of the factors that drive tourists' love development to the destination, as well as identify the tourist groups that are willing and more likely to develop love-based relationships.



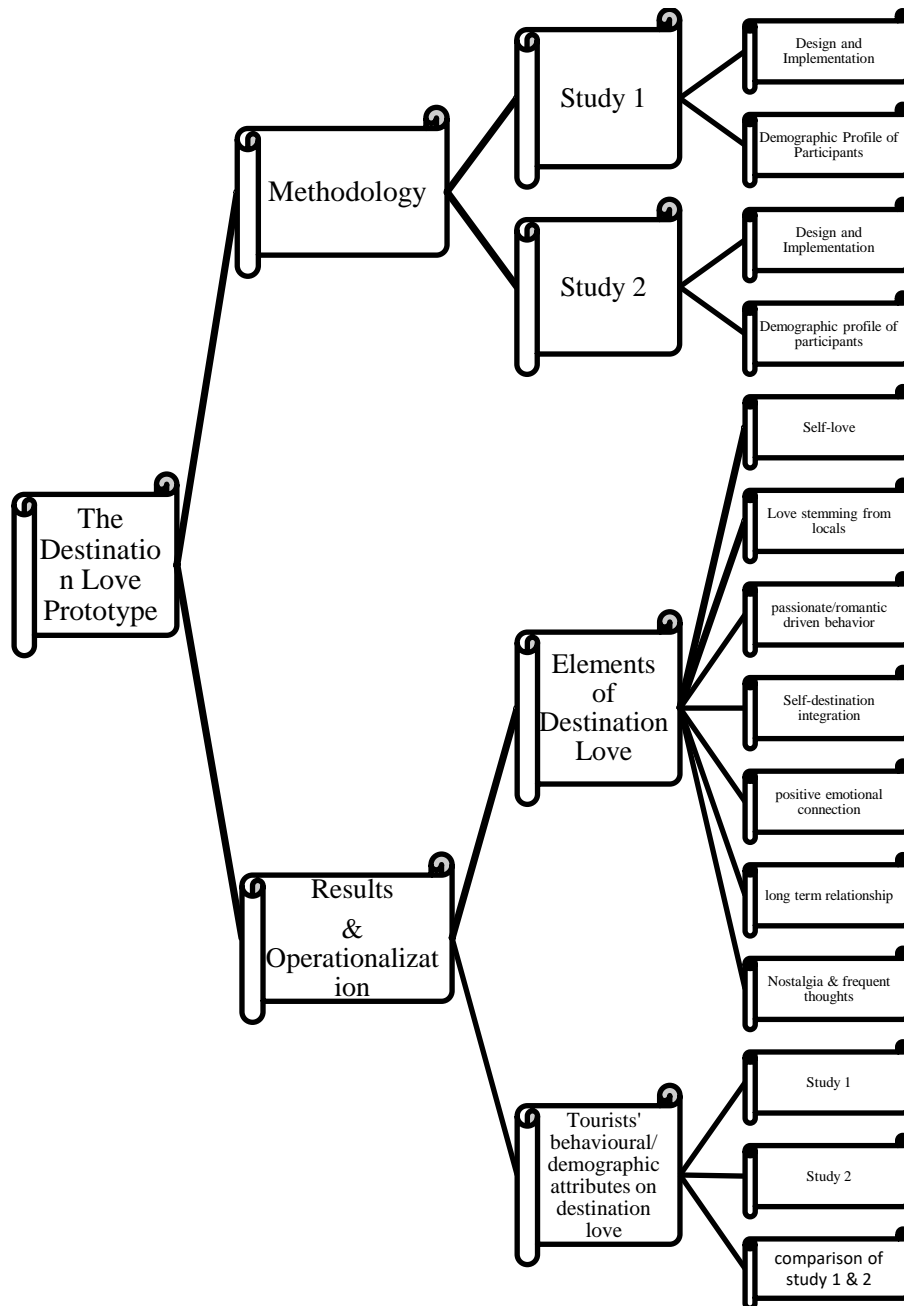


# METHODOLOGY & RESULTS

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# CHAPTER FOUR: THE DESTINATION LOVE PROTOTYPE

## PREVIEW OF CHAPTER FOUR



The previous chapters provided the theoretical basis and the justification of this research effort through the extensive literature review of the concepts of Tourism Marketing, emotions and love. This chapter aims to present the fundamental



theoretical and methodological steps adopted by this study in order to comprehend the development and operationalization of destination love. Hence this chapter introduces the theoretical framework of this dissertation by unraveling the implicit definition of love that tourists are using when they claim that they actually love a destination or place. Moreover, each of the emerged destination love items are explained and justified by existing academic theories.

Previous studies have revealed that vague and complex concepts, such as emotions or love (Shaver, Schwartz, Kirson, & O'connor, 1987; Fehr, 2006), are difficult to be defined in terms of necessary and sufficient criteria (Fehr 2006: 227) and are best characterized as prototypes (Rosch, 1975; Batra et al., 2012). A prototype is consisted of a number of attributes (or prototype features), which can be categorized into "central" or "most typical" exemplars of that category (Shaver et al., 1987:1062), that people associate with a specific kind of category (Fehr, 2006), in this study destination love. The more of these attributes a relationship or emotion has, and the more central they are to the prototype, the more likely a tourist is to consider it to be - sort of- love. The prototypes are considered to be cultural models (Batra, Ahuvia & Bagozzi, 2012) and in interpersonal love prototypes academics have proved that there is high level of similarity across gender, sexual orientation and age (Batra, Ahuvia & Bagozzi, 2012).

It is of utmost importance to stress that prototype-based definitions are vague and fuzzy (Shaver et al., 1987, Batra et al., 2012), since they are described by vague, fuzzy boundaries. For instance, a consumer can consider some brands as definitely loved, some brands as definitely not loved and some other brands as "sort-of loved" (Batra et al., 2012). Moreover, they are fuzzy because the phenomenon itself does not necessarily entail only the attributes of its elements, but also *antecedents* and *outcomes* (Batra et al., 2012). It is often crucial for the researchers to investigate whether a dimensional reduction can be possible, when eliciting the features of the prototype (Batra et al., 2012). For example, as it concerns the love prototype, Fehr (1988) identified 68 features and later Aron and Westbay (1996) managed to extract three underlying factors from them (passion, intimacy and commitment), by using factor analysis.

Since love encompasses several powerful psychological and mental mechanisms, it could be seen as a motivational powerful emotion or/and relationship that influences



behavior (Rauschnabel & Ahuvia, 2014). Unraveling mental prototypes, such as love, constitutes a challenge since they are considered tacit knowledge structures and thus they cannot be easily described and verbalized (Batra et al., 2012).

## METHODOLOGY (STUDIES 1 & 2)

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### CONSTRUCT DEFINITION, ITEM GENERATION AND INITIAL PURIFICATION

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Due to the exploratory nature of the study, a variety of qualitative approaches (face to face in- depth interviews and open-ended questions) were employed to gather primary data, like studies of similar nature (e.g., Aro et al., 2018; Christou, 2018; Andriotis et al., 2020). This methodological procedure is appropriate when observing and interpreting reality in order to establish a theory that will clarify what was experienced (Newman, Benz & Ridenour, 1998), given the complex and ambiguous nature of the phenomenon to be investigated (e.g., Christou, 2018), as well as the fact that there is lack of the exploratory qualitative research normally conducted when developing a new topic area (Batra et al., 2012). This research effort covers more broadly the need of a larger, multicultural and diverse sample composition since up until now, almost all studies on love in tourism have used smaller samples (e.g., Swanson, 2017, Aro et al., 2018; Christou, 2018; Andriotis et al., 2020) with less cultural diversity (e.g., Christou, 2018; Andriotis et al., 2020) or no cultural diversity (e.g., Lee & Hyun, 2016; Swanson, 2017; Aro et al., 2018).

Study 1 took place during a period of five months in 2016 (from June to October 2016) in the famous heritage tourist destination of Ancient Olympia, Greece. A thorough review of the extant literature of emotions in tourism and marketing fields was carried out in order to finalize the topics and the specific questions asked. In the first study, 103 semi-structured interviews were conducted. From the total of 136 people who were initially contacted by the researcher, 103 of them agreed to participate in the research and 75 of them claimed that they do love a destination and thus their interviews were taken into account for the analysis. Interviews were



transcribed and coded, in a database. In particular, synthesizing the extant literature and the data from the in-depth interviews, the preliminary identification of codes/items was accomplished through an extensive and thorough examination of the notes from the interview transcriptions, detecting similarities in tourists' responses as well as categorizing typical and specific love descriptors (Lykoudi et al., 2020). This initial qualitative analysis yielded 7 major dimensions of destination love, comprised of 71 items-descriptors.

Study 2 took place during a period of seven months in 2016 and 2017 (from December 2016 to June 2017) again in Ancient Olympia, Greece, capitalizing on the concentration of large number of tourists from multiple countries in a small village. 334 respondents (both national and international tourists) were eventually participated in the research. A semi-structured questionnaire was used to extend the results of the first study and gather additional insights into the notion investigated. This study yielded 57 additional items of destination love, again as the result of a tedious synthesis of tourists' descriptions and literature findings.

The extended time of data collection in the research field meets ethnographic principles (Christou, 2018) and contributes to the avoidance of seasonality biases. Given the complexity and novelty of destination love concept, the sampling in both studies was mostly theoretically grounded (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Tan, Kung & Lu, 2013), and thus the sample was purposive, in line with studies of similar nature (e.g., Ahuvia, Batra & Bagozzi, 2008; Pandowo, 2016).

More specifically, the first two studies of this research effort included the following sampling procedures; initially, by acknowledging that the striking majority of tourists, who visit Ancient Olympia, is part of a cruise tour, and thus has limited time to spend there, an activity sampling procedure was implemented. Activity sampling is a technique for estimating the proportion of time spent on a specific activity (Roll & Yadin, 1986). The researcher, in order to ensure the effectiveness of the activity sampling procedure, fulfilled the suggested conditions (Kelly, 1964): a) the observations were momentary, meaning that they were made at randomly selected times, b) the tourists were not affected by the researcher's presence and c) the types of tourists' activities and behaviors during their free-time at the research field were coded and analyzed carefully. This procedure was followed in order to mainly estimate the average time of a tourist's "free-time" at the research field (and thus



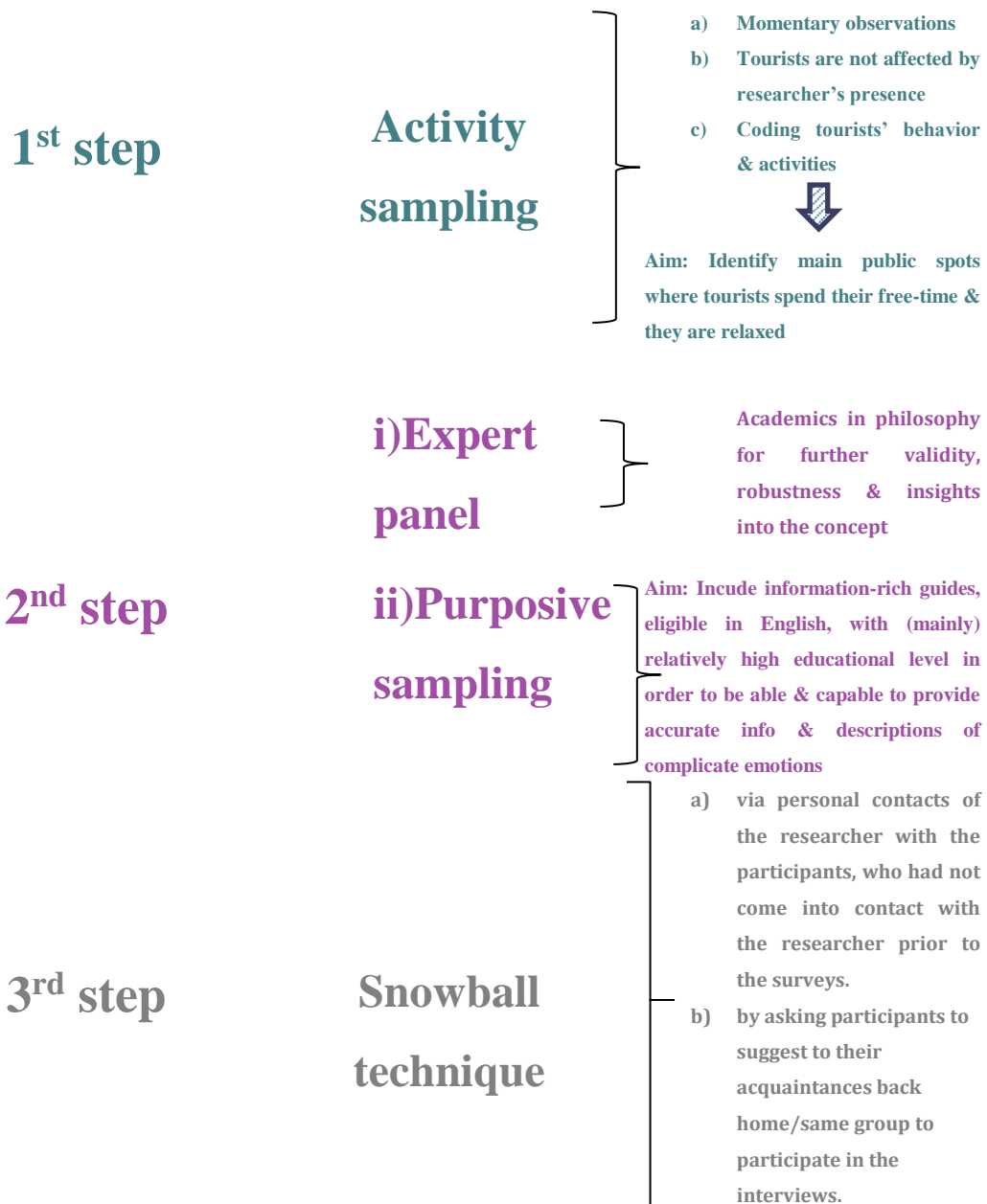
adjust the study's interview duration/questionnaire at tourists' free-time schedule) as well as the research field's public spots where tourists usually spent their free-time. Afterwards, both national and international tourists were initially randomly approached and chosen in public spots, where most tourists were spending their free-time, to be interviewed.

It should be stressed that the aim of these two studies were to find and include people, who were able to describe and articulate love and more specifically the complex concept of destination love as well as were capable and willing to provide the accurate information by virtue of knowledge or experience (Bernard, 2002, Lewis & Sheppard, 2006; Tongco, 2007). For this reason, the tourists, who were initially approached randomly, afterwards, they were "filtered" and included in the sample only these individuals who were able to act as information-rich guides. Hence, a non-random sampling procedure, namely purposive sampling was also implemented. Undoubtedly, for academics who are more quantitative-minded, non-random sampling procedure is the second-choice approach, since it generates potential issues of 'bias' (Rapley, 2014). However, purposive sampling is typically employed in qualitative research (Etikan, Musa & Alkassim, 2016), where the focal resource, via which sampling procedure decisions are made, is a focus on particular individuals, sites or situations, because they offer a specific- 'biased' or 'information-rich'-perspective (Patton, 2002; Rapley, 2014). Purposive sampling is a nonrandom technique, it is considered as an informant selection tool and thus it is especially exemplified through the key informant technique (Bernard 2002; Jarvis et al., 2004; Gustad, Dhillon & Sidibé, 2004; Lyon & Hardesty, 2005; Garcia, 2006), wherein one or a few individuals are identified and solicited to act as key, information-rich guides towards a concept, since they are able to better assist with the relevant research (e.g., Bernard 2002; Patton, 2002; Gustad et al., 2004; Garcia, 2006; Etikan, Musa & Alkassim, 2016). Key informants of this study were mainly academics in philosophy or highly educated individuals, who were able and willing to communicate as well as share their knowledge and give insights into a rather complex and novel concept such as destination love in an expressive, accurate, fluent and reflective manner in English language. Moreover, the participation of a number of academics in Philosophy (mainly from the USA and Europe) in both studies gave further robustness on the theory building. In particular, they initially described and articulated the notion of



destination love (study 1) and afterwards (study 2), they were asked to further speculate, explain and evaluate the findings of the first study in order to give further content and internal validity of the concept. Additionally, a snowball sample procedure was used in both studies, following analogous studies' procedures (e.g., Batra et al., 2012; Christou, 2018).

### Sampling procedure of Studies 1 & 2







The prolonged time in the research field and the higher numbers of participants - compared to that of other similar studies- were deemed crucial in order to allow reliable conclusions to be drawn for such a complex, personal and rather intricate inner issue, following Christou's (2018) procedure. Once some degree of theoretical information collection saturation was reached, the study 2 came to an end (procedure followed also by Mariampolski, 2006 and Christou, 2018), and a comparison with the existing literature was implemented (e.g., Patton, 2002; Tan et al., 2013). The aim was to compare the emergent codes with existing ones-if any-, and to investigate the extent to which there are any similarities, differences, discrepancies as well as conflicts, in order to enhance the validity, credibility, transferability, and dependability of the codes emerged (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Daengbuppa, Hemmington & Wilkes, 2006; Tan et al., 2013).

In both studies, respondents used their own love prototype to actually determine whether their most favorite and/or ideal destinations for vacations were clearly loved or not. The items of destination love were elicited from tourists, by asking them to describe love for a destination, what they perceived and felt as well as how they acted, when they experienced destination love, following Shaver and colleagues (1987) as well as Batra, Ahuvia and Bagozzi's (2012) research procedures. Both studies (study 1 and study 2) were conducted in English. The selection of the English language was based on the more recent studies that have shown no differences between language versions-native language versus English language- (e.g., Katerberg, Smith & Hoy, 1977; Tyson, Doctor & Mentis, 1988; Sanchez, Alonso & Spector, 2000).

The in-depth interviews of the first study, as well as the open-ended questions of the second study were analysed employing grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1994), in combination with McCracken's (1988) method, as suggested by Batra, Ahuvia and Bagozzi (2012). Grounded theory was first presented by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and it is a systematic methodology in the social sciences that aims to generate or discover a theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), where little is already known, or to provide a fresh slant on existing knowledge (Goulding, 1998). In other words, it is a research methodology that can be defined as "*the discovery of theory from data systematically obtained from social research*" (Glaser & Strauss 1967: 2). The grounded theory process sensitizes the researcher to the conceptual significance of emerging concepts and categories (Glaser, 1978). Without grounding in extent



knowledge, the recognition of the categories would be limited to the obvious and superficial as well as depriving the researcher of the conceptual leverage from which to develop theory (Glaser, 1978). The grounded theory process requires the researcher to actively review and interpret the raw data as well as the repeated ideas so that concepts become evident and are tagged with codes, which stem from the respondent data as *signifiers of, parts of, properties of, or instances of*, other coded concepts (Batra et al., 2012). Hence codes can be grouped into concepts and then into dimensions/categories. These dimensions can function as the cornerstone for the new theory. Grounded theory research is not “*atheoretical*”, instead it involves the generation of etic, theory-driven interpretations (Batra et al., 2012) and thus requires a comprehension of related theory as well as empirical work to improve theoretical sensitivity (Goulding, 1998).

In the coding procedure, a combination of codes into broader concepts constituted a focal element of the methodology. Having organized and ordered the qualitative data, the interactive process of grounded theory continued with a systematic data coding process that consisted of open, axial and selective coding in order to identify the discrete concepts or the building blocks of the data, following the methodology of Tan, Kung and Luh (2013). This secured even more the validity of destination love theory development process.

In particular, the coding procedure was the following; firstly, an open coding procedure was implemented in order to “*identify the discrete concepts or the building blocks of the data, with a focus on the nouns and verbs used to describe a specific conceptual world*” (Daengbuppa et al., 2006; Bakir & Baxter, 2011, as cited in Tan, Kung & Luh, 2013: 163). After every in-depth interview with a participant, the interview as well as the notes from the field were analyzed (the feature of analysis was mainly a word, sentence, expression, paragraph, or an observation) and open coded before moving to the next interview (Daengbuppa et al., 2006; Bakir & Baxter, 2011; Tan, Kung & Luh, 2013). Afterwards, the researcher proceeded to axial coding implementation, where the open codes that seemed interconnected were grouped together to create tentative statements of relationships among phenomena (Daengbuppa et al., 2006; Tan et al., 2013). For example, “passionate desire to visit the place” item, “feel a sense of longing to visit my most favorite destination” , “my most favorite destination triggers my romantic feelings” are grouped into



“passionate/romantic driven behavior”; while “this destination helps present myself to others as the person I want to be item”, “this destination makes me look like I want to look”, “this destination makes me feel like I want to feel item” are grouped into “desired self-identity”. Twenty six subcategories emerged, and these were later regrouped into fifteen categories, namely “self-identity”, “self-congruity”, “self-expansion”, “familiarity”, “frequent thoughts”, “life meaning rewards”, “nostalgia”, “emotional attachment”, “intuitive fit”, “positive psychological states”, “self-transformation”, “self-confirmation”, “commitment”, “well-being”, “love stemming from locals”. Selective coding was finally used to integrate and develop the theory in this study (in line with Tan’s et al., 2013 procedure). The fifteen categories mentioned above were integrated into seven dimensions: “self-love”, “self-destination integration”, “nostalgia”, “long term relationship with destination”, “passionate/romantic driven behavior”, “positive emotional connection” and “love stemming from the locals”.

Narrative face to face interviewing as well as open-ended written questions were not just treated as ‘data collection’ about “what really is and perceived” as destination love, but instead as a construction of empirical material via the participants’ prompted storytelling about destination love. Moreover, the researcher did not let the “voices of the field” speak entirely for herself in her analyses; she chose the quotes according to study’s criteria of importance from the interview and open-ended written questions transcripts. (e.g., Gertsen & Söderberg, 2011; Welch & Piekkari, 2017).

Rigor in data collection and coding was ensured via inter-coder reliability (Cohen’s kappa and Fleiss kappa), ethical considerations (e.g., anonymity of the respondents) and relevance of outcomes (Kitto, Chesters & Grbich, 2008; Batra et al., 2012; Langner et al., 2015; Christou, 2018). Two coders (specialized in Tourism Marketing) and afterwards seven independent coders (five in the fields of Tourism and Marketing as well as two in the fields of sociology and psychology) evaluated the dimensionality of destination love, as well as the emotionality (intensity) of the different love relations, in line with the study of Langner and colleagues (2015). Standardization across multiple coders was achieved (e.g., Barner-Rasmussen, Ehrnrooth, Koveshnikov, & Mäkelä 2014; Welch & Piekkari, 2017) and the initial list of 128 codes was decreased to 81 and subsequently it was hierarchically reduced to the 7



major categories/dimensions of destination love, following the methodology of Batra, Ahuvia and Bagozzi (2012).

Standardization across open-ended written questions (study 2) and in-depth face to face interviews (study 1) was achieved and ensured “*by consistently using one and the same interview guideline and by standardisation of the number and order of questions across all interviews*” (Gassmann & Keupp, 2007: 354) as well as open-ended written questions (reliability of measurement).

The superiority of the multiple studies approach lies on generating richer theory than a single study (Vallaster & Lindgreen, 2013). The three studies of this research move from being open and exploratory to being more focused and confirmatory.

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## 4.1. STUDY 1

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The first study combined three sampling techniques; activity sampling, purposive sampling and snowball sampling. The respondents were contacted either directly and randomly (and the researcher selected those who could work as information-rich cases) or through a snowball sampling procedure, following the procedure of Batra, Ahuvia and Bagozzi (2012) as well as that of Christou (2018), which was conducted internationally. Snowball procedure used in this survey was developed by following previous studies in love (e.g., Batra et al., 2012). The snowball sampling procedure initiated through personal contacts of the researcher with the participants, who had not come into contact with the researcher prior to the surveys (Batra et al., 2012). For achieving higher cultural diversity levels due to the multicultural nature of the research, the current study used an additional snowball collection method, by asking participants in the research field to suggest to their acquaintances back home to participate in the interviews via Skype.

Due to the exploratory nature of the study, informal semi-structured interviews were employed as appropriate information collection tools, to gather primary data for the first study (Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, 2011), alike analogous studies of similar nature (e.g., Batra et al., 2012; Swanson, 2015, 2017; Farmaki, Georgiou, & Christou, 2017; Moal-Ulvoas, 2017; Aro et al., 2018; Christou, 2018). Informal semi-structured interviews make people feel at ease, comfortable and allow them emerge themes



naturally (Christou, 2018). This methodological procedure is appropriate given the complex and ambiguous nature of the phenomenon to be investigated (Gummesson, 2005; Aro et al., 2018; Christou, 2018). Confidential taped semi-structured interviews were conducted by the researcher by using a voice recorder and lasted from 10 to 25 minutes, averaging 12-15 minutes.

In the research field, both national and international tourists were initially randomly approached and chosen in public spots to be interviewed. Furthermore, taking into account that the striking majority of tourists who visit Ancient Olympia is part of a cruise tour (neutrality towards Olympia), they have limited time to spend there, apart from sightseeing, and thus an activity sampling procedure was implemented. More specifically, the tourists' activities were observed by the researcher for ten days. This procedure aimed at recording the frequency at which one or more tourist activities are being performed (e.g., what tourists are doing in their free time, where they go in Olympia, when they have free time and at which spot they usually rest until they leave the village). Apart from the researcher, seven experts (one academic in tourism marketing field, specialized in Ancient Olympia destination, three local tour guides and three local tourism service providers) were asked about tourists' activities and their "free-time" public spots. This procedure helped the researcher to identify the main public spots where tourists relax and have free time and enabled the selection of individuals, who were able, available and willing to take part in the research and meet the objectives of the study (Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007; Christou 2018). Afterwards, from those individuals who were able to take part in the research, the information-rich cases were selected and included in the sample. The whole procedure ensured the input of a diverse spectrum of tourists, who have been exposed to various tourist destinations, tourism services and experiences.

To summarize, the general benefits of the above procedure is that research is conducted at a point where all tourists can be selected for the sample, the participants are information-rich cases and research is relatively cost efficient.

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#### 4.1.1. DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF STUDY 1

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The aim of the first study was to define and operationalize destination love and thus tourists were asked *explicitly* about love towards their most favorite/ideal destination



(this is in line with the procedure of Fournier, 1998; Ahuvia, 1993, 2005b; Batra et al., 2012; Kwon & Mattila, 2015; Langner et al., 2016; Swanson, 2017; Aro et al., 2018), which has not been examined, universally, in the literature yet and not generally about emotions, since numerous academics have already proved in the literature that love in situations other than close personal relationships [such as objects, brands and destination brands] exists and it was taken for granted. Pretests that included more general questions about emotions took place for 4 days in the research field before the main study and ten out of fifteen respondents showed dissatisfaction and less willingness to finish the interview (due to tourists' free-time restriction at the research field as well as fatigue). Thus, the final questions had to be as much as possible to the point about destination love and not generally about emotions, so that tourists were able to answer them without being annoyed or tired due to their rather restricted time. Initially, in study 1, respondents were asked about their general travel patterns, what kind of activities they like to do mostly during their trips, the main purpose of their trips (business, personal/pleasure, combination) and their main considerations and information sources for selecting destinations for their trips, based on EUROSTAT (2014).

Then, participants were asked about their behavioral travel patterns, their most favorite and/or ideal destinations for vacations, and the characteristics of this/these destination(s). This allowed some space to request additional information about their thoughts and feelings for this/these destination(s). Participants discussed their views and feelings about tourism destinations of their own choosing. This is in line with the procedure of previous studies in the field of marketing (e.g., Whang et al., 2004; Huber et al., 2010; Fetscherin et al., 2014; Rauschnabel & Ahuvia, 2014; Bagozzi, Batra & Ahuvia, 2016; Langner, Bruns, Fischer & Rossiter, 2016; Hegner et al., 2017), where participants had to answer the surveys with respect to their (most) favorite or loved brand.

During this discussion, the researcher got the opportunity to delve into the feelings of participants, regarding their most favorite destination(s), the existence and nature of their feelings, whether they (would) describe them as love, and if so, they were asked to explain the meaning and the content of their 'destination love' feelings (based on Langner et al., 2016). Participants were also asked to articulate the reasons why they were feeling in such a way and to argue extensively on the qualification of the



reported feelings as perceived destination love (in Line with Langner et al., 2016). The aim of those questions was to unravel more profound meanings and manifestations of love towards destinations, through the perception, description and understanding of each participant (Lykoudi et al., 2020).

Asking explicitly about love is the proper approach since the meaning of “love” should be set clear and distinctively from other concepts like mere liking (Langner et al., 2016). This explicit approach can add confidence to researcher that participants indeed describe love and not other concepts, it should also be an effective means to prevent people from using the word “love” too loosely (Langner et al., 2016), as well as speculate actively and vigorously on the specific notion.

Questions about the differences/similarities between their most favorite and ideal destinations -if any- were followed and finally their demographic characteristics were asked.

Since prototypes are quite fuzzy definitions, asking respondents what they really mean by claiming that they love a destination as well as the intensity of their destination love, in a love continuum, was a natural way of getting them to assess both its strength as well as its fit with the love prototype. Respondents were also asked to explain why each loved destination did qualify as perceived love and they were encouraged to keep talking and think more deeply about the topic, when possible. These questions aimed at revealing deeper meanings and facets of destination love, as perceived and articulated by each person.

Interviews were transcribed and coded, by delving deeper into each issue (Hennink et al., 2011), in a database. These initial codes were then sorted into groups (dimensions) based on similarity in responses and relevance to previous research on the brand love prototype, as suggested by Batra, Ahuvia and Bagozzi (2012). More specifically, the identification of codes and subsequently of major destination love dimensions was achieved via a detailed and careful examination of notes from the interview transcriptions, detecting similarities in tourists’ responses as well as classifying common and specific “love” settings. This process resulted in several major destination love dimensions, which could be used to compare the popular understanding of love in interpersonal, brand and destination contexts.





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#### 4.1.2. DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS

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In the first study, 103 semi-structured interviews were conducted. From the total of 136 people who were initially contacted by the researcher, 103 of them agreed to participate in the research and 75 of them claimed that they do love a destination.

These 75 respondents were evenly participated and split by gender (37 male and 38 female), predominantly from the United States of America (14,7%), followed by Italians (9,3%), French (6,7%) and British (6,7%), Germans (5,3%), Australians (5,3%), Spanish (5,3%) and Dutch (5,3%) as well as Portuguese (4%). All the other participants came from other countries. The participants ranged from 18 to 80 years of age ( $M = 40,93$ ), they were generally highly-educated (18,9% of basic education; 10,8% students; 28,4% university/college graduates; 28,4% master graduates and 13,5% PhD graduates as well as of highly monthly income ( $M=4.430$  euros). Furthermore, 57,3% were single, 37,3% married, 4% divorced and 1,3% widowed.

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## 4.2. STUDY 2

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In the second study, a semi-structured questionnaire was used, combined both qualitative (open ended questions) and quantitative approaches in order to enlarge, feed or accomplish the results as well as the insights of the first study. The same data collection procedure was used as in study 1 about destination love, and afterwards the love dimensions/ types of study 1 were presented to the respondents who were asked to choose the two most important love dimensions for them and further elaborate.

The aim of this study was threefold. The first goal was to gather additional insights into the notion of destination love. The second goal was to gain initial insights into the intensity, complexity, objectivity and vagueness/abstractness of the notion of brand love in comparison with that of interpersonal love; destination love in comparison with that of interpersonal love; and destination love in comparison with that of brand love, by analyzing the differences and commonalities among these loving relationships. The third aim was to analyze tourists' perceptions for the notions of passion, love, like and emotional attachment with respect to their emotional intensity, complexity, objectivity and vagueness as well as their differences and/or similarities.



#### 4.2.1. PROCEDURE AND IMPLEMENTATION OF STUDY 2

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In section 1, participants first confronted with general questions about their most ideal and favorite tourist destinations (whether they do have a favorite/ideal destination, whether they have visited them and if yes, how many times they have visited them) and whether they love at least one of them. Tourists who claimed that they love at least one destination, were asked to describe in details what they really mean by stating that they do love a destination (open ended written question).

Afterwards, in section 2, respondents, who claimed that they love a destination, were asked whether they had as a benchmark their interpersonal love feelings when they defined their love for a destination/place, or in other words, whether they defined their love for a destination taking into account their interpersonal love feelings. Subsequently, questions about destination love compared to interpersonal love were asked (with respect to intensity, complexity, objectivity, vagueness of the love relationships).

- i. Complexity of love is about respondents' ability to describe their love relationships feelings with detail and precision or/and their ability to specifically articulate which feelings arise in a love relationship situation, adopting the view of emotional complexity by Lindquistn and Barrett (2008).
- ii. Intensity of love is about the strength of the emotion/relationship
- iii. Vagueness of love is about the boundary-free nature of the concept, meaning that it cannot be fully classified and articulated as well as understood by the respondents. Emotions are by definition subjective or at least not objective, in the sense that they are bound to individuals who have/feel them, but this holds for all our cognitive abilities as well (Roeser, 2006).
- iv. Objectivity of love has to do with whether individuals perceive love (destination versus interpersonal) as a subjective projection or rather, as a form of objective discernment.

A separate sheet with objectivity, intensity, vagueness and complexity clarifications was given to each of the participants. Further clarifications were given to the respondents by the researcher when asked. For each love relationship type,



participants had on mind a person and a destination that best reflected the particular relation and that they loved most, following the procedure of Langner et al. (2015, 2016). Choosing the most loved person and destination supported a comparison of the most intense loving relationships.

The last questions of this section were about how much “destination/place love” differs from “interpersonal love” (from 0- destination love is completely different from interpersonal love to 10- destination love is very similar to interpersonal love) as well as in what exactly they differ or in what exactly they are similar (open-ended question).

In section 3, respondents were asked to indicate in a continuum (11-Likert scale from 0-not at all to 10-absolutely) the emotional intensity and the complexity of the concepts of passion, like, love and emotional attachment (following Ahuvia, 1992). Moreover, participants were asked to express their opinion about the relationship between a) love and emotional attachment, b) love and passion, c) love and like, by providing them with venn diagrams representations and verbal descriptions under each diagram (the procedure was exactly the same for all the above mentioned relationships). For example, concerning the relationships between love and emotional attachment, participants were asked to choose the venn diagram that best described their view about this specific relationship. The first (1) venn diagram depicted emotional attachment as part of love, meaning that love is a broader concept and includes emotional attachment; the second (2) venn diagram depicted love as part of emotional attachment, meaning that emotional attachment is a broader concept and includes love; the third (3) venn diagram depicted that there is an overlap between love and emotional attachment, meaning that love and emotional attachment are two different concepts but share some common features; the fourth (4) venn diagram depicted love and emotional attachment as two completely different and distinct concepts; and the fifth (5) venn diagram depicted love and emotional attachment as the same concept. The same procedure was followed for love and passion, as well as love and like. Under each venn diagram there was a written explanation as well. Given the demanding nature of questions using venn diagrams, further clarifications were given to the participants by the researcher when asked.

In section 4 and based on the coding of the first study, participants were asked to choose maximum two destination love dimensions that reflect their opinion about



destination love and they were asked to describe them in details or give more destination love suggestions, apart from the given ones. In section 5, they were asked whether they do love a brand or not. These participants who claimed that they do love a brand, they were asked to state which brand they love, whether they have used/bought it (yes or no) and how much they love it (from 0-not at all to 10-absolutely), (Ahuvia, 1992). Afterwards, they were asked to describe in details what they mean by saying that they love this brand. Questions about the comparison between destination and brand love with respect to emotional intensity, complexity, objectivity and vagueness were followed. Similarly with section 2, for each relationship type, participants had on mind a brand and a destination that they love most. The last questions of this section were about how much destination and brand love differ (from 0-not at all to 10-absolutely) and participants were asked to describe in details in what exactly brand and destination love differ or are similar (open-ended questions).

In section 6 the same procedure was implemented about brand and interpersonal love. The final section was about the demographic characteristics of the respondents.

The analyses of the responses to the open-ended questions featured two methods. By applying grounded theory (Charmaz, 1995, 2006, 2014; Glaser & Strauss, 1999; Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Batra et al., 2012; Thornberg, & Charmaz, 2014; Langner et al., 2015), the aim was to identify whether there are more items or dimensions of destination love that were not resulted from the first study, as well as essential potential emotional differences and similarities of (1) the interpersonal and brand-related loving relations; (2) the interpersonal and destination-related loving relations; and (3) the destination and brand-related loving relations.

Following Batra's and colleagues'(2012), process, grouping initial codes into more general constructs was based on similarity and relevance to previous research on the love prototype and constituted a main part of the analysis for Studies 1 and 2, as the original list of 128 codes (study 1 & study 2) was hierarchically reduced to the 7 major dimensions/components of destination love, which could give insights into understanding the notion of love in the tourism context.

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#### 4.2.2. DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE PARTICIPANTS

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The sample consisted of 334 participants, with an average age of 36.86 years (SD = 11.51) and 52.4% were women. Furthermore, 20.1% of the participants were from the USA, 10.8% French, 10.5% British, 10.2% Greeks, 9.9% Germans, 7.5% Italians, 5.7% Australians, 3.9% Dutch, 3.9% Spanish and the rest came from other countries. 35.9% of the respondents were university/college graduates, 37.4% master graduates, 9.3% students, 9% of high school/basic education and 8.4% PhD graduates. 53.2% were single, 39.1% married, 6.7% divorced and 0.9% widowed. Their average monthly income was 4.387 euros. All respondents agreed to participate voluntarily and received no money for taking part in the research.

## RESULTS & OPERATIONALIZATION OF DESTINATION LOVE

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From study 1 and study 2, seven tourist-experienced major dimensions of the core destination love prototype were emerged. This study entails a description of the major dimensions/ components of destination love stemming from tourists' behavior and their experience at the destination. The notion of destination love was evident amongst the majority of participants. 72,8% of the participants (75 out of 103) claimed to love a destination (study 1) and 75% of the respondents claimed that they do love their most favorite destination (study 2). They defined and articulated the concept of destination love in details and as a result the destination love prototype was qualified in the strictest sense of the word.

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### 4.3. ELEMENTS OF THE DESTINATION LOVE PROTOTYPE

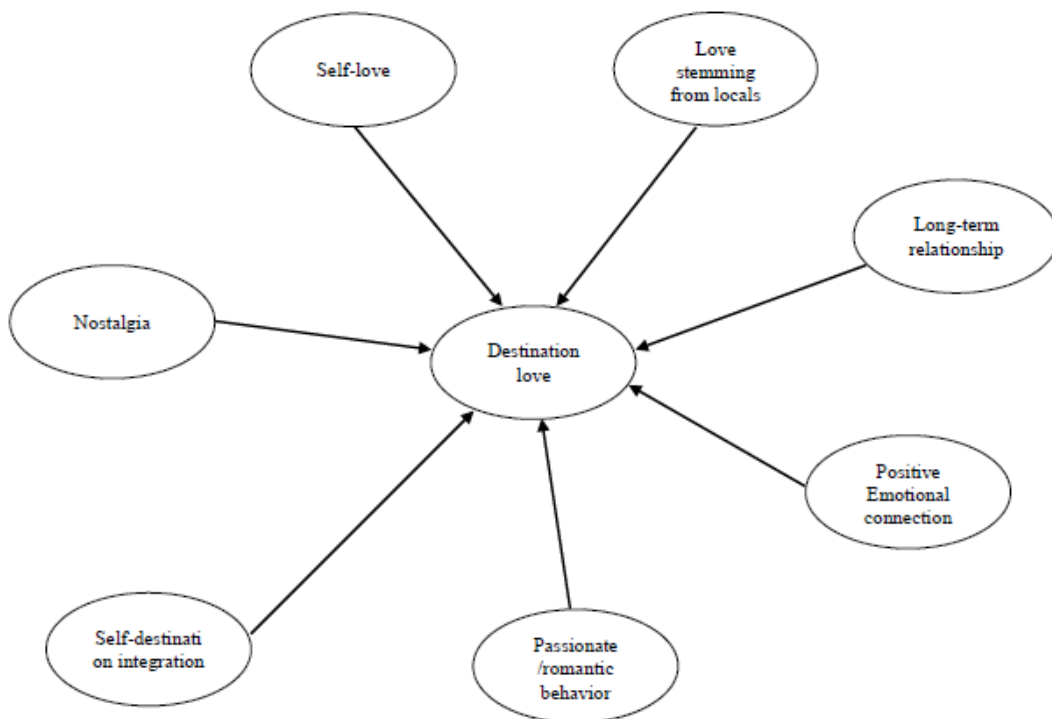
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The two studies resulted in 7 major dimensions/ components, 4 of which are in accordance with that of brand love suggested by Batra, Ahuvia and Bagozzi (2012), namely: (1) passion-romantic-driven behaviors, (2) self-destination integration, (3) positive emotional connection and (4) long term relationship. The other 3 components that were revealed by the two studies about destination love are the following: (5) self- love (intra-love), which is in line with Batra's and colleagues (2012) strongly-

held values and existential meaning component, (6) love stemming from locals and (7) nostalgia, which is in line with Ortiz & Harrison's (2011) study.

Figure 7 depicts the dimensions of destination love emerged from the first two studies.

Figure 7: destination love dimensions



Inter-rater reliability, open, axis and selective coding were conducted for analysing the results of both studies. Control coding was also done to estimate whether the destination love items/ codes were formulated in such a way that the items could be “objectively” belonging to the destination love concept. Two independent raters and later seven independent raters evaluated the construct of destination love. Cohen's kappa coefficient  $\kappa$  (Cohen, 1960) was used to measure the agreement between two raters and found to constitute a substantial agreement between the raters (Cohen's kappa= 0,778), based on Landis and Koch (1977). More specifically, out of 128 destination love items, both raters agreed to include 89 items, both raters agreed to exclude 28 items, only the first rater wanted to include 3 items and only the second rater wanted to include 8 items.



However, due to the high complexity of the notion under study and the exploratory nature of the research, seven independent raters further evaluated the items of destination love. In order to do that, Fleiss's Kappa measurement (Fleiss, 1971) was implemented, using the following calculation formula:

$$0 \leq x_{ij} \leq m \quad \sum_{j=1}^k x_{ij} = m \quad \sum_{i=1}^n \sum_{j=1}^k x_{ij} = mn$$

where  $n$  = number of subjects,  $k$  = number of evaluation categories and  $m$  = number of judges for each subject. For every subject  $i = 1, 2, \dots, n$  and evaluation categories  $j = 1, 2, \dots, k$ , let  $x_{ij}$  = number of judges that assign category  $j$  to subject  $i$ .

The 7 researchers agreed on 81 items out of 128, which gives a 0,7344 (73,44%) rate of agreement (Fleiss kappa), Free-marginal kappa = 0.47; 95% CI for free-marginal kappa [0.39, 0.55]; Fixed-marginal kappa = 0.45; 95% CI for fixed-marginal kappa [0.40, 0.50], that constitutes a substantial agreement among the raters. Agreement can be considered as if a fixed number of individuals assign numerical ratings to a number of items then the fleiss kappa will give a measure for the consistency of the ratings.

All these 81 items were also included in the initial 89 items of the two raters.

Reliability and validity is met and ensured via the research process, coding and analysis. More specifically:

#### **Inter-rater reliability**

- ✓ Cohen's kappa
- ✓ Fleiss kappa

#### **Construct validity** (Welch & Piekkari, 2017)

- ✓ multiple cases and sources of evidence converge on love explanation
- ✓ establishing a chain of evidence → linkages between data and conclusions
- ✓ expert panel

#### **Internal validity** (Welch & Piekkari, 2017)

- ✓ explanation building (establishment of a study database consisting of field notes, interviews and open-ended written answers, which were professionally transcribed and coded)
- ✓ pattern matching (comparing/ matching between emerging theoretical love dimensions and evidence with the literature)
- ✓ elucidating the dynamics of the items relationships





**External validity** (Welch & Piekkari, 2017)

- ✓ Multicultural samples → the results are not driven by the unique institutional setting of a single nation
- ✓ Participants from different nations share predominately similar perceptions of destination love → Generalizability

Table 7 depicts the emerged dimensions and items of destination love:

Table 7: destination love dimensions and items (study 1 & 2)

Destination love dimensions	Destination love items
<i>Self-love</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This destination helps to discover my self</li> <li>• This destination inspires me</li> <li>• This destination makes me appreciate my self more</li> <li>• This destination brings out the best version of me</li> <li>• When I am in this destination, I feel the real me</li> <li>• This destination stimulates all my senses</li> <li>• This destination improves my self awareness</li> <li>• This destination improves my self confidence</li> <li>• This destination makes me understand the real values in life</li> <li>• Visiting this destination is a personal investment for me</li> <li>• This destination fulfills my mind and soul</li> <li>• This destination contributes to my self balance</li> <li>• This destination contributes to my self actualization</li> </ul>
<i>Love stemming from locals</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I feel welcomed by the locals</li> <li>• I feel strong affection towards the locals</li> <li>• I feel strong affinity towards the locals</li> <li>• I feel strong connection with the locals</li> <li>• There is mutual understanding with locals</li> <li>• I share the same values with the locals</li> <li>• Hospitality in this destination is great</li> <li>• Locals are very kind towards me</li> <li>• Create personal relationships (friendship, romantic etc) with locals</li> <li>• Locals are friendly towards me</li> <li>• I love the people of this destination</li> </ul>
<i>Passionate/romantic driven behavior</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I have a passionate desire to visit this destination</li> </ul>



<p><i>Passionate/romantic driven behavior (cont.)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I feel passionate about this destination</li> <li>• I feel a sense of longing to visit this destination</li> <li>• I feel attracted by this destination</li> <li>• This destination triggers my romantic feelings</li> <li>• I spend my time passionately in this destination</li> </ul>
<p><i>Self-destination integration (incl. attitude strength)</i></p>	<p><b>Self-identity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This destination helps present myself to others as the person I want to be</li> <li>• This destination makes me look like I want to look</li> <li>• This destination makes me feel like I want to feel</li> <li>• This destination reflects myself</li> <li>• I feel that I belong to this place</li> <li>• This destination is an important part of myself</li> </ul> <p><b>Familiarity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When I am in this destination, I feel like I am home</li> <li>• This destination reminds me of home</li> </ul> <p><b>Self-expansion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This destination has broadened my competencies</li> <li>• This destination has broadened my interests</li> <li>• This destination has given new perspectives in my life</li> <li>• This destination has influenced my way of thinking</li> </ul> <p><b>Life meaning &amp; intrinsic rewards</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This destination makes my life meaningful</li> <li>• This destination makes life worth living</li> <li>• This destination is inherently important for me</li> <li>• I experience feelings of desire to live in this place</li> </ul>
<p><i>Positive emotional connection</i></p>	<p><b>Intuitive fit</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I feel psychologically comfortable when I am in this destination</li> <li>• This destination meets my needs perfectly</li> <li>• This destination fits my tastes perfectly</li> <li>• I love the uniqueness of the destination</li> <li>• I love the authenticity of the destination</li> <li>• I feel unique/special because of having visiting this destination</li> <li>• I do care about this destination</li> <li>• I have roots from this destination</li> </ul>



<p><i>Positive emotional connection (cont.)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• I (would) feel sad if something bad happens to this destination</li></ul> <p><b>Emotional attachment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• I feel emotionally attached with this destination</li><li>• This destination means a lot to me</li><li>• This destination is very special to me</li><li>• No other place can provide the same holiday experience as this destination</li><li>• This destination is the best place for what I like to do during my holidays</li><li>• I would not substitute this destination for any other place</li></ul> <p><b>Positive psychological states/ emotions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• I feel happy when I am in this destination</li><li>• I feel relaxed when I am in this destination</li><li>• I feel harmony when I am in this destination</li><li>• I feel amazed by this destination</li><li>• I feel alive when I am in this destination</li><li>• I feel safe in this destination</li></ul>
<p><i>Long term relationship</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• I will be visiting this destination for a long time</li><li>• I expect that this destination will be part of my life for a long time</li><li>• I have a sense of long term commitment with this destination</li><li>• I will visit this place the next time I go on vacations</li><li>• I intend to keep visiting this place</li><li>• I am a loyal visitor of this place</li></ul>
<p><i>Nostalgia &amp; Frequent thoughts</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• I feel nostalgic about this destination</li><li>• I miss this destination often</li><li>• I feel sad when I am not able to visit this destination</li><li>• If I could never visit this destination again, I would feel miserable</li><li>• I frequently find my self thinking about this destination</li><li>• This destination comes directly to mind when I want to go on vacations</li><li>• I frequently find my self thinking about visiting this destination</li><li>• I feel happy when I think of this destination</li></ul>



#### 4.3.1. SELF-LOVE

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In branding, according to Batra, Ahuvia and Bagozzi (2012), loved brands apart from providing a wide variety of benefits such as comfort and relaxation, they are also more likely to be linked to something the consumers perceive as deeply held values such as self-actualization, creativity, close interpersonal relationships (Richins, 1994), existential meaning, religious or cultural identities. The same academics gave the example of Apple, which represented creativity and self-actualization.

Tourists nowadays do not travel only to visit attractions at different destinations, but also to fill their higher self needs (Maslow, 1943; Waitt, 1997; Gnoth, 1997). In addition, tourists travel in order, not only to experience a destination, but also to find, change or/and create their “self” (Crang, 2004). After all, one may consider *“vacationing as a cultural laboratory where people have been able to experiment with new aspects of their identities, their social relations, or their interaction with nature and also to use important cultural skills of daydreaming and mind-travelling. Here is an arena in which fantasy becomes an important social practice”* (Löfgren, 1999: 7). It is clear that the concept of “self” in tourism should be seen as an integral part of tourism behavioral research, since its importance has been highlighted by many academics (e.g., Gnoth, 1997; Waitt 1997; Bouchet, Lebrun & Auvergne, 2004; Joynathsing & Ramkissoon, 2010; Manhas & Dogra, 2013). Tourists develop and transform their “self” by living in and learning about other people and cultures, or challenging experiences of nature (Wearing & Dean, 2003). While travel is conceived as a resource in the attempt to achieve self-realization, tourism actually confirms one’s view of the world rather than transforming it (Rojek, 1993). Every individual is a unique and different entity from all the others. Hence some tourists develop and transform their ‘self’ by learning about other people and cultures, or by having challenging experiences (Wearing & Dean, 2003), while others conceive travelling and tourism as a resource in an attempt to achieve self-realization, confirming their view of the world rather than transforming it (Rojek, 1993). Tourism both sustains and is sustained by stories and moments that define tourist’s self as well as impacts upon tourist’s senses of self (Crang, 2004). The telling of tourists’ stories is as crucial as actual events where *“the journey becomes a spatial and temporal frame to be filled with identity narratives”* (Elsrud 2001: 605). Tourism experience entails tourists’



interaction with (new) surroundings, including people, places and activities (Wearing & Dean, 2003). The philosophy behind the interactionism theory fundamentally incorporates the person in an ongoing search for meaning and identification (Denzin, 1992; as cited in Wearing & Dean, 2003) in an effort to contextualize his/her sense of self within his/her environment (Wearing & Dean, 2003). Tourism can be seen as an excellent means of searching the unfamiliar and going beyond our comfort zone, which constitutes a crucial basis for self-development (Wearing & Dean, 2003).

The concept of “self-love” is seen in this study as a multi-faceted construct that is described by various items of “self” (e.g., self-discovery, self-actualization, self-awareness, self-balance, self-appreciation, self-confidence, self-fulfillment, inspiration, “best version of me”, “self-investment”, “self-stimulation” and “understand the real values in life”). Two well-known influential psychological thinkers, Rogers (1961) and Maslow (1962) emphasized the importance of self-love. They stressed the importance of living up to one’s ideals, even becoming self-actualized.

In this study, “self-love” follows Bransen’s (2006: 23) reasoning, since it concerns the quality of one’s own flourishing, well-being and attunement to the normatively significant features of his/her life as well as it captivates oneself in virtue of the volitional necessity of his/her loving state of mind. Aristotle coined the terms “self-love” and “other-love” and the question whether people prefer their favorite other over the self has triggered philosophical and social-behavioral thinking over the years (Gebauer, Goritz, Hofmann & Sedikides, 2012). This question is also crucial to economists’ continuous debate on whether human decision making is self-oriented or other-oriented (Fehr & Fischbacher, 2003), and it entails evolutionary discourse on individual-selection versus group-selection processes (Wilson & Sober, 1994; as cited in Gebauer et al., 2012: 1). Self-oriented preferences/decisions can be held at implicit level and they facilitate self-favorism in crucial and everyday situations (Gebauer et al., 2012). Self-oriented preferences maximize self-protection (Sedikides, 2012), which in turn boosts evolutionary fitness (Darwin, 1872, as referred in Gebauer et al., 2012). Other-oriented preferences/decisions can be held at explicit level and preferences for favorite other prevail over preferences for self (Gebauer et al., 2012). Explicit other-oriented preferences bear caring for others (Baumeister & Leary, 1995), establishing and cementing interpersonal bonds (von Hippel & Trivers, 2011), which



in turn, boost evolutionary fitness (Darwin, 1872, as referred in Gebauer et al., 2012). In Aristotle's terms, people deep down love the self-more than their favorite others (Gebauer et al., 2012). However, human beings are cultural animals (Baumeister, 2005), who can come to believe that they love their favorite others more than they love the self (Gebauer et al., 2012). Thus, it can be assumed that "self-love" is evident in unidirectional kind of love (such as brand love), whereas "other-love" is evident in bidirectional kind of love.

Cohen (1979) has suggested five main modes of the tourist experience: (1) the recreational mode, which denotes that the trip is seen by tourists as a form of entertainment (2) the diversionary mode, where the trip is seen as an escape from boredom and the routine (3) the experiential mode, where the trip is seen as looking for meaning in life by experiencing the authenticity of the life of others or searching authentic experiences (4) the experimental mode; it is congenial to the more thoughtful travelers, the most serious of the drifters who are pre-disposed to try out alternative life-ways in their quest for life meaning, the experimental tourist is in search of himself and (5) and the existential mode; the "existential" tourist launches him/herself into a journey of self-discovery, self-fulfillment, self-enlightenment and self-actualization. Wearing (1998: 47) stresses that *"tourism is an arena where individuals have certain autonomy over their lives, free from the disciplines of work and the responsibilities of home"*. In a similar vein, during leisure time, a person is free from his/her everyday routine and responsibilities and he/she is therefore able to choose activities for their own enjoyment, personal development and re-skilling (Rojek, 1995). According to Kelly (1996: 45) *"this relative freedom makes possible the investment of self that leads to the fullest development of ourselves, the richest expression of who we want to become, and the deepest experience of fulfillment"*.

Self-love was emerged as a distinct type of love for destinations and a higher need, following Bransen's (2006), Rojek's (1993) as well as Wearing's and Dean's (2003) reasoning. Specifically, self-confirmation and/or transformation were found to (co)exist denoting the non-mutually exclusiveness of the concepts, and thus self-love concerns, among others, the quality of one's own flourishing, well-being and attunement (Bransen, 2006), confirmation (Rojek, 1993), and transformation (Wearing & Dean, 2003) to the normatively significant features of his/her life as well



as it captivates oneself in virtue of the volitional necessity of his/her loving state of mind (Bransen, 2006).

Self-love was found to be a multi-item construct, as revealed by the respondents themselves, and was described by various items of 'self'. Specifically, self-love construct was found to be composed by the following items:

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#### 4.3.1.1. SELF-ACTUALIZATION

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Self-actualization is *“the tendency of the organism to move in the direction of maturation. . . . It moves in the direction of greater independence or self-responsibility”* (Rogers, 1961: 35). Pearce and Caltabiano (1983) claimed that positive travel experiences mirror fulfillment of self-actualization, among others. The pursuit of a (new) experience is based upon “self-actualization” through the (re)discovery of one’s intellectual and physical aptitudes (Bouchet et al., 2004), as well as self-expression and socializing (Keller & Edelstein, 1993). Tourists’ need for spare time and holidays is associated with their wishes for self-actualization (Gnoth, 1997; Prebensen, Larsen & Abelsen, 2003). For example, cultural travel provides opportunities for self-actualization, the process of achieving or fulfilling one’s potential (Holloway, 2004). The components of self should be interrelated with that of destination branding (Manhas & Dogra, 2013). Self-actualization constitutes one of the basic criteria for tourists to revisit the destination (Balakrishnan, 2009; Manhas & Dogra, 2013). However, more studies should take place to explain self-actualization in the field of tourism.

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#### 4.3.1.2. SELF-DEFINITION

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Self-definition was described as love for a destination by some participants. This concept has been investigated mainly in the field of social psychology (Tesser & Paulhus, 1983; Markus, 1983; Kihlstrom & Cantor, 1984; Greenwald & Pratkanis, 1984; Epstein, 1990; Swann, 1990; Freund & Smith,





1999), but also in developmental psychology (Harter, 1983; Freund & Smith, 1999). The concept of self-definition “*refers to that part of self-related knowledge that contains attributes crucial for the definition of oneself*” (Freund & Smith, 1999: 55). It encompasses the most crucial characteristics to which persons feel committed and which subjectively differentiate their own person from that of others (Wicklund & Gollwitzer, 1981; Markus, 1983; McGuire, 1984; Brandtstadter, 1985; Cantor & Kihlstrom, 1989; Brandtstadter & Greve, 1994; Freund & Smith, 1999). An important destination could constitute a vital aspect to our self-definition (Stedman, 2002). Self- definition is not an “objective” description of a person, but individuals’ self-conceptions which are fundamental for the definition of their own person (Freund & Smith, 1999). In marketing literature, the investigation of the concept of self-definition is rather missing and this is a significant gap, since its importance in behavioral research has been proved to be essential.

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#### 4.3.1.3. SELF-DISCOVERY

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Some tourists articulated their love for a destination as self-discovery. Indeed, tourism gives the opportunity to an individual to “find his/herself” (Wearing & Dean, 2003). According to Fussell, “*a travel experience is bound up with personal discovery*” (as cited in Craik, 1986: 26). It is the discovery of self that is the goal of those tourists on their inner journey to enlightenment (Carr, 2017: 138).

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#### 4.3.1.4. SELF-FULFILLMENT

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Self-fulfillment as a concept exerts fascination in the fields of psychology and philosophy, it is valued as a fundamental element of a good, happy human life and it is explained and evaluated in various ways (Gewirth, 1998). According to Gewirth (1998: 14) “*self-fulfillment consists in carrying to fruition one’s deepest desires or one’s worthiest capacities. It is a bringing of oneself to flourishing completion, an unfolding of what is strongest or best in oneself, so*



*that it represents the successful culmination of one's aspirations or potentialities. In this way self-fulfillment betokens a life well lived, a life that is deeply satisfying, fruitful, and worthwhile*". Self-fulfillment constitutes a maximizing conception, since it subsumes all other values of human life and it is the ultimate purpose of human achievement for a good life (Gewirth, 1998). According to Middleton and Clarke (2002), self-development is a person's striving for personal fulfillment of their potential. People with a high propensity to participate in travel and tourism, are those most possibly to focus on their own self-development (Middleton & Clarke, 2002). Tourists increasingly link their vacations with their personal hobbies and interests and thus leisure travel and tourism is more and more associated with the fulfillment of tourists' self-development and inner-directed needs (Middleton & Clarke, 2002). It is this powerful association that makes vacation travel to be regarded as more of a necessity than a luxury (Middleton & Clarke, 2002). Tourists' self-fulfillment aspirations will have an even more important effect on travel purchase decisions in the next decade (Middleton & Clarke, 2002). Even though some academics (e.g., Middleton & Clarke, 2002) equate self-actualization with self-fulfillment or self-development, it has to be stressed that self-fulfillment is a different concept from self-realization as well as self-actualization. As it concerns the differences between self-fulfillment and self-realization, it can be argued that self-fulfillment is a maximalist human value, centered on individuals' achievement of their strongest and most profound desires, whereas self-realization is more moderate in its value status because of its tie to means as against ends (Gewirth, 1998). Self-realization is mainly capacity-fulfillment oriented, whereas self-fulfillment entails both capacity-fulfillment and aspiration/desire-fulfillment (Gewirth, 1998). Moreover, some individuals might not crave self-realization since its activities might be considered too difficult. On the contrary, self-fulfillment, at least as fulfillment of aspirations, is craved by all individuals even though the means toward achieving it might not themselves be craved (Gewirth, 1998). Concerning the differences between self-fulfillment and self-actualization, it can be argued that in self-actualization, self is perceived as a set of determinate potentialities that await actualization, whereas self-fulfillment



gives more room for creativity, as a person creates both his/her powers (by giving them determinate form) and his/her developed states or activities. This development is formed by the person's aspirations (Gewirth, 1998). Moreover, the process of actualization is automatic like that of natural process of growth, whereas the process of fulfillment is marked by choices made by the self-fulfilling person, denoting individual's freedom to decide which potentialities he/she craves to develop based on his/her deepest aspirations (Gewirth, 1998). In addition, in self-actualization the aspect of the self that is due to be actualized dwells in diverse "needs" based to a great extent on desires that emanate from adjustment problems experienced by individuals in diverse social relationships (Gewirth, 1998). In self-fulfillment the aspect of self to be fulfilled stems from "aspirations," denoting individuals' strongest desires for self-gratification.

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#### 4.3.1.5. SELF-INVESTMENT

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Some tourists perceived their love for a destination as self-investment. Tourism and traveling encourages an individual to surpass his/her own physical and psychological resources and limits (e.g. sport tourism) (Bouchet, Lebrun & Auvergne, 2004). Tourists through traveling can achieve their desire to meet different customs, cultures, people, sceneries, acquire knowledge and live unique experiences that justify one's investment in "self-capital" (Lykoudi, Zouni & Tsogas, 2020). Tourists hold in themselves all these unique physical, sensual and cognitive experiences which contribute to their self-growth and thus self-capital (Lykoudi, Zouni & Tsogas, 2020).

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#### 4.3.1.6. SELF-APPRECIATION

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Some other participants described their love for a destination as self-appreciation. In particular, an individual's loved tourism destination, according to participants, can make him/her appreciate and value him/herself more (Lykoudi, Zouni & Tsogas, 2020). Some people may perceive visiting a destination as a personal strategy aimed to self-appreciation. In a recent study,



Walker and Moscardo (2014) identify self-appreciation as an important value in tourism and define it as the recognition of personal insight (p. 1186). All traveling experiences, acquired at the destination, can affect tourists, in any existential register, and can possibly cause the visitors appreciate or value more themselves. It is therefore possible for loved destinations to incite tourists adopting conducts that are deemed to value more positively their self (Lykoudi et al., 2020).

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#### 4.3.1.7. UNDERSTAND THE REAL VALUES IN LIFE

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Some participants claimed that their loved destination makes them *understand the real values in life*. They stated that their loved destination provides the means to modify their self-priorities and change their mindset and lifestyle, in a meaningful and desired way, by focusing mainly on “inner directedness” and not on consumerism and materialism (Lykoudi et al., 2020). Such behaviours include acts that appear to be beyond the logic of commercialization (Lykoudi et al., 2020).

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#### 4.3.1.8. SELF-AWARENESS

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Some tourists claimed that self-awareness means being in love with a destination. “*For centuries travel has been associated with a broadening of awareness and self-development through knowledge and exposure to other cultures and human circumstances*” (Middleton & Clarke, 2002: 78). Brown and Ryan (2003: 823) define self-awareness simply as “*knowledge about the self*”, meaning that self-awareness is an internal awareness of one’s cognitions and emotions. Other academics state that self-awareness constitutes awareness or knowledge of one’s thoughts, emotions, and behaviors and can be perceived as a state and thus, it can be situational (Fenigstein, Scheier, & Buss, 1975). Self-awareness is treated as similar to other concepts, such as self-consciousness (e.g., Fenigstein, Scheier, & Buss, 1975; Webb, Marsh, Schneiderman & Davis, 1989; as cited in Richards,



Campenni & Muse-Burke, 2010) and insight (Roback, 1974; Grant, Franklin & Langford, 2002; as cited in Richards, Campenni & Muse-Burke, 2010). In line with Morin's (2006) self-awareness view, the qualitative studies of this research have revealed that tourists self-awareness occurs mainly when they focus not on the external environment of the destination, but on the internal milieu; tourist becomes a reflective observer while vacationing, processing self-information, presumably because he/she has plenty of time to do it there, and not in their everyday lives. The tourist becomes aware that he/she is awake and actually experiencing particular mental events in loved destination, emitting behaviors, and possessing unique characteristics (Lykoudi et al., 2020). Tourist's self-awareness stems from one's desire to make his/her holiday experience more meaningful by seeking for something that can refresh and recharge them (Lykoudi et al., 2020). However, it should be stressed that the environmental and cultural context of destination encourages the tourist's self-awareness, as well. According to Tan et al. (2013), it is more possible for tourists who develop 'consciousness/awareness' to engage in 'creative experiences' rather than to take part in more general activities.

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#### 4.3.1.9. SELF-CONFIDENCE

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Some participants described their love for a destination as self-confidence, which constitutes an important concept that has been used in many cases to understand consumer behavior (Bearden, Hardesty & Rose, 2001). Consumer self-confidence is described as the extent to which a person "*feels capable and assured with respect to his or her marketplace decisions and behaviors*" (Bearden, Hardesty & Rose, 2001: 122). Consequently, "*consumer self-confidence reflects subjective evaluations of one's ability to generate positive experiences as a consumer in the marketplace*" (Adelman, 1987, as cited in Bearden, Hardesty & Rose, 2001: 122). Consumer self-confidence enables the consumer to operate efficiently when faced with complex decisions entailing vast amounts of information and strain from marketplace pressures (Bearden, Hardesty & Rose, 2001). In this study, some tourists described their love for destination as helping them being more self-confident. For example, tourists' social interactions in the loved destination (e.g., meeting and talking with new



people) help them become more sociable in their everyday life, or tourists when being in their loved destination feel more attractive and better looking (e.g., sun tanned).

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#### 4.3.1.10. SELF-BALANCE

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Some tourists claimed that love for a destination is about developing principally tourists' mental balance and well-being which is achieved by the unique aesthetics, intellectual stimuli as well as hedonic pleasures experienced in the destination. To the extent of our knowledge no research has been carried out on love and emotions in relation to self-balance in psychology in general (Lykoudi et al., 2020).

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#### 4.3.1.11. INSPIRATION

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Love for destinations is considered by some other tourists as inspiration. The uniqueness, goodness or beauty of the destination affects emotionally the inspired person. This may indicate a transcendent relationship. Watson, Clark and Tellegen (1988) considered 'inspiration' as an item on their measure of positive affect.

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#### 4.3.1.12. BRINGING OUT THE BEST VERSION OF ME

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Some other tourists stated that destination love is all about *bringing out the best version of them* meaning that their loved destination contributes to reveal or awake their best inner quality, behaviour, traits. It is their loved destination which triggers their best version. For example, when archaeologists visit a loved heritage destination, they live the real experience of their field at its birthplace. It is actually the amalgam of their interests, skills and place, which (the latter) triggers their best version (Lykoudi et al., 2020).



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#### 4.3.1.13. STIMULATING ALL MY SENSES

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According to Middleton and Clarke (2002:78) “*vacations and their associations with rest and recreation (in a literal sense of being renewed in mental and physical ways), have always had a stimulating effect upon people’s minds...*”. Some tourists articulated that a loved destination awakes their senses through the tastes, sounds, smells, sights, interactions with all destination elements as well as its people. All these senses were also described to be intertwined. Moreover, even some ordinary routines back home (e.g., food) can trigger individuals’ senses differently due to the setting of the loved place. Ultimately, the loved destination provides a combination of tastes, noises, aromas, sights that in other contexts could not impact tourists’ senses, but in loved places, they stimulate and enrich them (Lykoudi et al., 2020).

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#### 4.3.2. POSITIVE EMOTIONAL CONNECTION

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All participants described their loved destinations in positive emotional terms. Tourists’ positive emotional connection with loved destination includes multiple positive affects (in line with Batra et al., 2012), such as happiness, relaxation, fun, excitement, harmony, and pleasure, as well as the unique/ natural/intuitive fit between tourists and destinations and tourists’ attachment with destination.

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##### 4.3.2.1. Positive psychological states

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Batra et al. (2012) stressed that a loved brand generates psychological states such as happiness and pleasure which are conceived as being part and parcel of using the product. A loved destination was found to encompass psychological states such as happiness, relaxation, harmony, pleasure, safety and these states are perceived by tourists as being part and parcel of using and experiencing destination products and services. In these two studies, tourists stated that they feel amazed by the loved destination, they feel happy, relaxed,





harmonious, safe and alive when they are at this destination. Tourists' positive emotions and psychological states (e.g., happiness, excitement) is fundamental for deriving meaning from their holiday activities (Filep & Deery, 2010) and constitutes an essential element of the destination love prototype (analogous to brand love based on findings of Batra et al., 2012).

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#### 4.3.2.2. SENSE OF NATURAL/ INTUITIVE FIT

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Destination love comprises a sense of intuitive fit with the destination; and the extent to which tourists feel naturally/intuitively connected to the destination.

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##### 4.3.2.2.1. Love for the place itself

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There is a kind of intimacy associated with place, where place is a center for emotional and physical exchange, a felt experience of sensual intensity and complexity (Tuan, 1977; Williams, Patterson, Roggenbuck & Watson, 1992; Li, 2000; as cited in Trauer & Ryan, 2005: 482). Some tourists described destination love as caring for the place itself (e.g., by donating money or taking care and actions for the preservation of the place), as well as they (would) feel sad if something bad happens to their loved destination. Hence, tourists translate destination love as their strong desire to preserve the natural environment of the destination as well as its cultural sites and unique attributes, by for example, donating money to the community for taking care of it or by taking actions themselves in order to protect the destination. Moreover, some tourists stated that uniqueness and authenticity of the most favorite destination are aspects of love.



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#### 4.3.2.2.2. Uniqueness of destination

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Some participants of this study stated that destination love is all about destination's uniqueness. More specifically, some tourists argued that destination uniqueness is translated as love towards their most favorite destination and it has to do with destination's special natural sites, (cultural/heritage/natural) attractions, signature food or music and local customs, which draw their attention and make the destination stand out, compared to other (similar) places. Thus, destination love for some individuals could refer to the extent to which tourists consider that a destination is atypical or unusual, denoting its uniqueness and distinctiveness, compared to the competition. In addition, destination uniqueness address tourists' need to differentiate from others (in line with the view of Franke and Schreier, 2008 about brand uniqueness) and therefore satisfying their ego-identification needs (Bairrada, Coelho & Coelho, 2018). Destination uniqueness could be defined as *"something clearly different from or unique in comparison to other competing destinations felt by visitors"* (Jun, 2016: 216). Moreover, uniqueness can be perceived as the distinctiveness of a destination's attributes, resources or characteristics that constrains other destinations from imitating it (e.g., Parkerson & Saunders, 2005; Moilanen & Rainisto, 2009; Forristal & Lehto, 2009; Chan, Peters & Marafa, 2016). After all, destination uniqueness makes individuals become more self-connected to the (destination) brand (Kemp, Childers & Williams, 2012). This finding is also in line with that in the branding literature (e.g., Escalas & Bettman, 2003; Netemeyer, Krishnan, Pullig, Wang, Yagci, Dean, Ricks & Wirth, 2004; Albert et al., 2008; Hegner, Fenko & Teravest, 2017). Destination uniqueness constitutes one of the main attributes that have been applied to brand theory broadly (Jun, 2016). In branding, Albert, Merunka and Valette-Florence (2008) as well as Hegner, Fenko and Teravest (2017) have proposed uniqueness as one dimension of brand love and stated that a loved brand is valued and perceived as unique. Moreover, it is supported that the brand



uniqueness can enhance self-brand connections (Escalas & Bettman, 2003; Netemeyer et al., 2004), which allow a person to connect to others (e.g., Escalas, 2004). Furthermore, uniqueness is related to the feeling of idealization (Albert et al., 2008), which has been stressed in the majority of the interpersonal relationships theories (Shirikhodaei & Nabizade, 2011; Maisam & Mahsa, 2016). Brand uniqueness could be perceived as something special (Netemeyer et al., 2004) that differentiates and distinguishes a product/brand from the competing ones (Kemp et al., 2012; Jun, 2016) and it is often established from previous experiences with the brand or advertising claims (Netemeyer et al., 2004). Brand uniqueness may impact both consumer preferences and their willingness to pay a price premium (Kalra & Goodstein, 1998). Additionally, brand uniqueness could rely on one or more dimensions that could relate to both product features (e.g., uniqueness is often associated with higher brand quality), and to more intangible qualities (e.g., uniqueness is associated with superior brand value) (Carpenter, Glazer & Nakamoto, 1994; Netemeyer et al., 2004; Malär, Nyffenegger, Krohmer & Hoyer, 2012).

At this point, it should be stressed that some respondents of this study described in a similar way the concepts of destination uniqueness and authenticity as destination love. In fact, these tourists used these concepts interchangeably when they were describing destination love. *“In looking for authenticity, some tourists focus on the product in terms of its uniqueness and originality, its workmanship, its cultural and historical integrity, its aesthetics, and/or its functions and use”* (Hugues, 1995, as cited in Lunardo & Guerinet, 2007: 72). In the fields of consumer psychology, management and tourism, it is perceived that uniqueness is an essential form/dimension (Lewis & Bridge, 2001; Beverland, 2005; Kolar & Zabkar, 2010; Moulard, Raggio & Folse, 2016; Shirdastian, Laroche & Richard, 2019) or a crucial precondition (Koydemir, Şimşek, Kuzgun & Schütz, 2018) of (brand) authenticity. Furthermore, Heidegger (1996) argued that “uniqueness” and



“authenticity” are related concepts and societies would lack uniqueness without authenticity.

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#### 4.3.2.2.3. Authenticity of destination

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The notion of authenticity is an essential concept of research within the tourism context, since it provides academics with pivotal insights into tourists' behavior (MacCannell, 1973; Pearce, 1982, 1985; Ross, 1993; Wang, 1999; Reisinger & Steiner, 2006; Kim & Jamal, 2007; Belhassen, Caton, & Stewart, 2008; Zhu, 2012). According to Ram, Bjork and Weidenfeld (2016:111) *“authentic is often described in terms of its characteristics being real, reliable, trustworthy, original, first hand, true in substance, and prototypical as opposed to copied, reproduced or done the same way as an original”*. A tourist's perception on authenticity is subjective and experiential (Kolar & Zabkar, 2010). Some academics (Boorstein, 1964; Turner & Ash, 1975; Tysoe, 1985) have seen tourism as essentially an aberration, meaning that tourists are basically shallow persons, who are satisfied with superficial, inauthentic, staged experiences provided by the destination they visit. On the contrary, the majority of academics in tourism (MacCannell, 1973, 1976; Pearce, 1982, 1985; Cohen, 1988; Ross, 1993; Clapp, 1999; Reisinger & Steiner, 2006; Kim & Jamal, 2007; Belhassen, Caton, & Stewart, 2008; Zhu, 2012) support that the quality of tourism is enhanced by authenticity and that travelers are in search for authentic experiences, genuine contact with the locals and place that they visit, abstaining from staged, superficial or contrived experiences. According to Taylor (2001:9) *“tourism sites, objects, images, and even people are not simply viewed as contemporaneous productions. Instead, they are positioned as signifiers of past events, epochs, or ways of life. In this way, authenticity is equated as original”*.



Consumers respond positively and consistently to authentic brands (Mody & Hanks, 2019). From the qualitative studies, this showed to be the case of a tourist articulating destination love as authentic experiences at the destination (the genuineness, originality and integrity of the place as well as truthful to what it claims to be) could be a relevant consideration and component of his/her love. Morhart, Malär, Guèvremont, Girardin & Grohmann (2015) claimed that brand authenticity is the extent to which consumers consider the brand as being true to itself and the consumer; it has integrity and is able to help customers to be true to themselves (Mody & Hanks, 2019).

Pearce and Moscardo (1985) proved that higher levels of tourists' interest in authenticity are linked to tourists' desires to accomplish higher levels of personal fulfillment or/and actualization, whereas lower levels of tourists' interest in authenticity are linked to desire in mainly satisfying biologically related drives or needs such as hunger, thirst, or shelter. Pearce and Moscardo (1985) have also proved that tourists, who are more possibly to express self-actualization or self-esteem motivation, are less possibly to be satisfied with staged or inauthentic experiences than are those who are more concerned with satisfying biological needs. Kolar and Zabkar (2010) described authenticity based on the pleasure of tourists and the tourists' perceptions of "*how genuine are their experiences*" (p. 654). Tourists in this study suggest perceived place authenticity as component of destination love.

Tourists' love for a destination was also described as an intuitive sense of fit between themselves and the place. Concerning the natural fit, there were some tourists who described destination love as feeling psychologically comfortable when being in this destination or as this destination meets their needs perfectly, or as this destination fits their tastes perfectly. A loved destination is thus augmented in such a way that the tourist perceives relevant, unique added values which match their comfort, needs and tastes closely. This is in line with Batra's et al. (2012) findings for brand love as well as de Chernatony and



McDonald's (2001) suggestions for successful brands. Moreover, natural fit encompasses the roots/origins of tourists. Some tourists claimed that they love a specific destination because it is their birthplace or the place they were raised/lived.

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#### 4.3.2.3. Emotional Attachment

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Feeling emotionally attached to a brand has been proved to be an important element of brand love (e.g., Fournier 1998; Thomson et al., 2005; Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006; Batra et al., 2012). Apart from these positive emotions, other academics have also claimed that consumers are possibly to experience strong desires to keep proximity with their loved objects, even experiencing "separation distress" when they anticipate or experience being away from them (Hazan & Zeifman, 1999; Thomson et al., 2005; Park et al., 2010; Batra et al., 2012). In the two first studies, such attachment was usually referred in participants' descriptions about their loved destination, because according to them, a loved destination is very special for them, irreplaceable, and non-substitutable and thus would cause sadness if lost. This is in line with Batra's et al. (2012) findings about brand love.

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##### 4.3.2.3.1. Destination attachment

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Studies in environmental psychology, leisure, and tourism suggest that individuals develop strong attachment to places and recreation activities (Williams & Vaske, 2003; Kyle et al., 2004; Prayag & Ryan, 2012). In the tourism field, numerous studies have investigated the nature and nuances of tourists' emotional relationships with places (Prayag & Ryan, 2012). These emotional tourists' relationships with places have been studied, conceptualized and operationalized under numerous related terms such as place bonding (e.g., Hammitt, Backlund & Bixler, 2006), sense of place (e.g., Tuan, 1980; Kaltenborn, 1998; Walsh, Jamrozny & Burr, 2001; Stedman, 2003; Campelo, Aitken, Thyne & Gnoth, 2014; Liu & Cheung, 2016) and mostly as place attachment (e.g., Williams et al., 1992;



Hidalgo & Hernandez, 2001; Williams & Vaske, 2003; Altman & Low, 2012; Ram, Björk & Weidenfeld, 2016; Scannell & Gifford, 2017; Woosnam, Aleshinloye, Ribeiro, Styliadis, Jiang & Erul, 2018; Vada, Prentice & Hsiao, 2019; Dwyer, Chen & Lee, 2019; Patwardhan, Ribeiro, Payini, Woosnam, Mallya & Gopalakrishnan, 2020; Liu, Hultman, Eisingerich & Wei, 2020). In tourism literature, these tourist-place emotional relationship concepts are poorly articulated and usually cannot be differentiated (Stedman, 2003). Various definitions of place attachment have been suggested in the literature. Place attachment is defined as the emotional link between an individual and a specific spatial setting (Williams et al., 1992; Hidalgo & Hernandez, 2001; Kyle, Graefe, Manning & Bacon, 2003; Kyle et al., 2004; Gross & Brown, 2006, 2008) or the personal connection the individual feels for a place (Kyle et al., 2004c). This emotional link between individuals and places generates “*the sense of physically being and feeling in place*” or “*at home*” (Yuksel, Yuksel, & Bilim, 2010: 275) and gives a sense of trust and security (Tsai, 2012). Place attachment constitutes a multidimensional concept (Gustafson, 2001; Scannell & Gifford, 2010a; b) entailing an individual’s psychological process and locality (Scannell & Gifford, 2010), as well as an individual’s positive emotional connection to a particular space/environmental setting (Low & Altman, 1992; Riley, 1992; Cuba & Hummon, 1993; Fullilove, 1996; Mesch & Manor, 1998; Bricker & Kerstetter, 2000; Hidalgo & Hernandez, 2001; Giuliani, 2003; Williams & Vaske, 2003; Kyle, Bricker, Graefe & Wickham, 2004; Manzo, 2003, 2005; Hou et al., 2005; Hwang, Lee, & Chen, 2005). Although, some academics argue that visitation (one or more times) is a prerequisite for place attachment development (Moore & Graefe, 1994), some others state that it may be possible for people to develop strong feelings towards places even when they have never visited this specific place (Lee, 1999). Moreover, Halpenny (2006) states that even for the first time visitors, a sense of place attachment may have created prior to their first visit to the place. This could be a result of stories that visitors have heard from friends, relatives and family about the specific destination, or through mass





(Yuksel, Yuksel & Bilim, 2010), as well as social media. Place attachment *“involves an interplay of affect and emotions, knowledge and beliefs, and behaviors and actions in reference to a place”* (Low & Altman, 1992: 5). Other academics conceive place attachment as an emotional (Hidalgo & Hernandez, 2001), psychological or cognitive (Hummon, 1992) and functional (Moore & Graefe, 1994) bond with a place (Halpenny, 2006; Yuksel, Yuksel & Bilim, 2010; Kaplanidou, Jordan, Funk & Ridinger, 2012).

Sense of place is described as the meaning attached to a spatial setting by an individual or a group of individuals (Stedman, 2003) and acquired by an experience or a set of experiences in a spatial setting, built via the usage of all human senses and evolved over time (Tuan, 1975). According to Relph (1976), sense of place is based on interpersonal relationships that are created through an amalgamation of experiences in a particular setting. Moreover, according to Shamsuddin and Ujang (2008) “sense of place” is a person’s interaction with a place, its physical elements and constructed meaning(s) as well as its corresponding attributes. Shamai (1991) claimed that “sense of place” describes the relationship between people and environmental setting. In addition, the concept of “sense of place” has been used to describe the special and unique features of a specific environmental setting (Foote & Azaryahu, 2009).

Place belonging is perceived a social bonding that may additionally encompass a spiritual tie toward social and communal environments shared by people (e.g., religious site); and place bonding, is described as a strong emotional connection, temporary or lasting, between an individual and a specific place or site (e.g., lake or heritage site) (Hammitt, Backlund & Bixler, 2006).

There is a conceptual debate in the literature, as some academics claim that place attachment is perceived an overarching concept and sense of place, place affect, place social bonding, place dependence as well as place identity are its forms (Williams et al., 1992; Kals & Maes, 2002; Williams & Vaske, 2003; Yuksel, Yuksel & Bilim, 2010; Scannell & Gifford, 2010a, 2010b), whereas others argue that sense of place is the broader term



and place attachment is a subdimension (Hummon, 1992; Butz & Eyles, 1997; Hay, 1998; Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001; Stedman, 2003; Kyle et al., 2004).

Although many studies in tourism have conceptualized attachment mainly as an individual's affective, emotional, and symbolic investment with a setting (Yuksel et al., 2010), the cognitive side of attachment is equally important, since attachment is actually originated in a complex network of cognitive processes, which entails numerous episodic, context-related, and relationship-specific attachment representations (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2003; Reitsamer, Brunner-Sperdin & Stokburger-Sauer, 2016). Thus, although emotions are usually evoked when attachment is strong, attachment is mainly facilitated, enhanced and reflected by mental representations encompassing self-cognitions, thoughts, and personal memories (Berman & Sperling, 1994; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007; as cited in Reitsamer, Brunner-Sperdin & Stokburger-Sauer, 2016). Mental schemas are thus essential to classify a place as part of the self, to create a positive feeling of "oneness" with a place (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007), and to perceive a place's resources as one's own (Aron et al., 1992; Mittal, 2006; as cited in Reitsamer, Brunner-Sperdin & Stokburger-Sauer, 2016). In tourism & leisure context, this means that as a tourist's experience occurs, his/her brain captures impressions from the environmental setting using all human senses, merges these impressions, and stores them in memory (e.g., what a destination looks like, how it feels to ski down a mountain) (Reitsamer, Brunner-Sperdin & Stokburger-Sauer, 2016). These stored mental schemas are then retrieved for attitude and attachment development (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007; as cited in Reitsamer, Brunner-Sperdin & Stokburger-Sauer, 2016).

Academics in the field of tourism have stressed that there are two main types of place attachment, one stemming from the physical attachments formed and the other stemming from the interpersonal relationships created within the environmental context (Williams, Patterson, Roggenbuch & Watson, 1992; Hidalgo & Hernandez, 2001; Kyle, Graefe, & Manning, 2005; Brocato, 2006, 2007; Lee, Kyle & Scott, 2012). Place



attachment is considered a multidimensional concept, which is consisted of two to four interrelated dimensions (Kyle et al., 2003, 2004; Hwang, Lee, & Chen, 2005; Gross & Brown, 2006, 2008; Yuksel et al., 2010; Ramkinssoon, Weiler, & Smith, 2012; Tsai, 2012; Ram, Bjork & Weidenfeld, 2016).

The striking majority of tourism academics (e.g., Williams, Patterson, Roggenbuck & Watson, 1992; Moore & Graefe, 1994; Bricker & Kerstetter, 2000; Warzecha & Lime, 2001; Kyle, Absher, & Graefe, 2003; George & George 2004; Gross & Brown, 2008; Yuksel, Yuksel & Bilim, 2010; Prayag & Ryan, 2012; Lee & Shen, 2013) have proposed place identity and place dependence as two dimensions of place attachment. However, place attachment is mainly divided into three attitudinal components, consisting of self-referent cognition, emotions/affective component and functional component or behavioral commitments (Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001; Kyle et al., 2004a, 2005; Brocato, 2006; Halpenny, 2006; Ramkissoon, Weiler & Smith, 2012). The question if place attachment is best described by three different components is still under discussion (Ram et al., 2016). The different components of place attachment were proved to be significantly interrelated in previous academic investigations (Kyle et al., 2003; Gross & Brown, 2008; Yuksel et al., 2010). However, some researchers perceive place attachment as a uni-dimensional construct (e.g., Ram et al., 2016), either as a unified latent variable (Hwang et al., 2005; Ramkinssoon et al., 2012) or an observational construct (Prayag & Ryan, 2012; as cited in Ram et al., 2016). There is interdependence between the components of place attachment, based on previous studies which investigated the concept of place attachment as unified (Hwang et al., 2005; Prayag & Ryan, 2012; Ramkinssoon et al., 2012).

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#### 4.3.2.3.1.1. THE FOUR MAIN DIMENSIONS OF PLACE ATTACHMENT

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Place attachment is perceived as the most prevalent concept in the tourism literature to describe place emotional and psychological bonding between



a tourist and a specific place (Hwang et al., 2005; Prayag & Ryan, 2012; Tsai, 2012; Aro et al., 2018). Place attachment is related to emotional branding, wherein emotional and psychological ties are created via a brand's meaningfulness functional and emotional values as well as rewarding brand experiences (Tsai, 2012; Aro et al., 2018). Dimensions of place attachment include place identity (Proshansky, 1978; Proshansky, Fabian, & Kaminoff, 1983; Stedman, 2002; Hinds & Sparks, 2008; Prayag & Ryan, 2012), place affect (Kals, Shumaker, & Montada, 1999; Hinds & Sparks, 2008), place social bonding (Hammit, Backlund, & Bixler, 2006; Ramkissoon et al., 2012), and place dependence (Stokols & Shumaker, 1981; Bricker & Kerstetter, 2000; Prayag & Ryan, 2012). Considerable theoretical and methodological advancements have been made in this area by researchers and scholars (Kyle et al., 2005), arguing that place attachment is an important part of the self and evokes strong emotions (Yuksel et al., 2010). In their study, Yuksel et al. (2010: 274) state that place attachment is viewed either as an outcome variable, predicted by activity involvement and place characteristics (Gross & Brown, 2008; Hou et al., 2005; Hwang, Lee, & Chan, 2005), motivations (Kyle, Graefe, Manning, & Bacon, 2004), as well as commitment, demographics, specialization and previous experience (Moore & Graefe, 1994; Kyle et al., 2004a), or as an antecedent variable, influencing consumer loyalty, customer satisfaction, perceived crowding, spending preferences, and leisure participation patterns (Kyle, Absher, & Graefe, 2003; Kyle et al., 2004a; George & George, 2004; George & Alexandru, 2005; Hou, Lin, & Morais, 2005; Hwang et al., 2005; Brocato, 2006; Alexandris, Kouthoris & Meligdis, 2006; Lee, 2003; Lee et al., 2007; Simpson & Siquaw, 2008).

- i. Place affect or affective attachment is the strong emotional bond people develop with a place, and constitutes the affective component of place attachment (Ramkissoon, Weiler & Smith, 2012). It has received limited attention in the literature (Kyle et al., 2004; Yuksel et al., 2010; Ramkissoon et al., 2012; Tsai, 2012; Ram et al., 2016), and it is recognized as a distinct concept from



place identity (Kyle et al., 2004a, 2005; Brocato, 2006; Halpenny, 2006).

- ii. According to Prayag and Ryan (2012) place identity constitutes the most substantial construct determining place attachment. Place identity encompasses both cognitive and affective elements (Ramkissoon, Weiler & Smith, 2012) and refers to “*an individual’s strong emotional attachment to particular places or settings*” (Proshansky, Fabian & Kaminoff, 1983: 61), and how these specific settings provide meaning and purpose to life (Williams & Roggenbuck, 1989; Shamai, 1991; Giuliani & Feldman, 1993). More simply, place identity refers to a person’s psychological investment with a place that has evolved over time (Williams & Patterson, 1999) as well as the symbolically important connection of the self with a specific place (Stedman, 2002; Ramkissoon, Weiler & Smith, 2012). Place identity can enhance a tourist’s feelings of belonging to a tourist destination (Tuan, 1980), where people can express and affirm their identity (Kyle et al., 2004). Therefore, place identity entails “*those dimensions of self that define the individual’s personal identity in relation to the physical environment by means of a complex pattern of conscious and unconscious ideas, beliefs, preferences, feelings, values, goals and behavioral tendencies and skills relevant to this environment*” (Proshansky, 1978: 155). Place identity is a strong predictor of place attachment, showing that a tourist’s self-identity and relationship with a place contributes to feelings of attachment (Hou, Lin & Morais, 2005). Not all places create a strong connection with an individual’s self -identification process, however people usually identify with places which mirror their own identities (Proshansky, Fabian, & Kaminoff, 1983; Kyle et al., 2004b; Brocato, 2006). Place identification represents a significant substructure of self-identity, a psychological feeling as well as an important symbolic and affective connection between an individual and a place, created through the accumulation of experience (Lalli,



1992; Stedman, 2002; Williams & Vaske, 2003; Cheng, Wu & Huang, 2013). Tourists' identification with the place's identity increases their satisfaction and loyalty for this place (Yuksel, Yuksel, & Bilim, 2010). Repeat visitation to a place enhances self-place identification and thus attachment is formed (Williams et al., 1992; Moore & Graefe, 1994). A tourist may develop destination attachment, because of its holiday activities offered there (e.g., good location for hiking, swimming, skiing, surfing) and unique scenery or experiences or because of what the destination symbolizes (Yuksel et al., 2010).

- iii. Place dependence (or functional attachment) is about "*how well a setting serves goal achievement given an existing range of alternatives*" (Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001: 234) and constitutes a form of bonding (Hammit, Backlund & Bixler 2006), where places satisfying various needs normally contribute to a more embedded, extensive, or deeper place dependence compared to places where fewer needs are met (Stokols & Shumaker, 1981). Place dependence constitutes the behavioral component of attachment (Ramkissoon, Weiler & Smith, 2012) and reflects the ability of a place in adequately providing amenities, attributes and conditions that meet and support particular tourist's goals, facilitate tourist's desired activities or serve instrumental values (Stokols & Shumaker, 1981; Schreyer, Jacob & White, 1981; Williams & Roggenbuck, 1989; Moore & Graefe, 1994; George & George, 2004). Hence place dependence allows for a relationship with the attributes of the particular place, where the activity is offered to materialize (Williams, Patterson, & Roggenbuck & Watson, 1992). Place dependence, also known in the literature as functional attachment, stems from a transactional view that suggests individuals assess places against other similar or competitive places (Williams & Vaske, 2003; Yuksel, Yuksel & Bilim, 2010), based on how well those places meet their functional needs (Brocato, 2006). According to Borden and Schettino (1979) as well as



Yuksel et al. (2010), place dependence represents the conative domain of attachment and incorporates the actions or behavioral tendencies of a person regarding a place. Place dependence therefore is more evaluative in nature, as tourists value and identify with a particular place for the benefits it offers them (Moore & Graefe, 1994). The functional characteristics that are necessary to satisfy tourist's needs may be related to the physical aspects of the place such as hiking paths and camping facilities (Alexandris, Kouthouris & Meligdis, 2006). In addition, accessibility to the place may increase place dependence (Williams & Vaske, 2003, as cited in Alexandris, Kouthouris & Meligdis, 2006). The relative importance of place identity and place dependence may differ among individuals and may even influence the nature and scope of the experience sought by them (George & George, 2004). Hence individuals who are motivated by pull (external, cognitive) factors may tend to form place dependence (George & George, 2004), as *"the value of a setting to the individual is based on specificity, functionality, and satisfaction of a place and its goodness for hiking, fishing, camping, scenic enjoyment and so forth"* (Kyle et al., 2004a:124). Thus, place dependence is considered more important for tourists without a personal connection with the place (Hou et al., 2005). Similarly, those individuals who are motivated by push (internal, emotional) factors may develop place identity with a destination (George & George, 2004), since place identity *"captures recreationists' emotional and affective bonds with the setting"* (Kyle et al., 2004b: 65) and it is more meaningful for those individuals who are familiar with the destination's culture or have a personal bond with it (Hou et al., 2005).

Tsai (2012) acknowledged the three above mentioned constructs (place dependence, place identity, and affective attachment) as the main components of place attachment.

- iv. Place social bonding is also acknowledged as a component of place attachment by numerous academics (Mesch & Manor, 1998;





Hidalgo & Hernández, 2001; Kyle, Mowen & Tarrant, 2004), it refers to interpersonal relationships that are developed in a place and it is perceived to be mainly cognitive (Ramkissoon, Weiler & Smith, 2012). Place social bonding is usually “*associated with the meanings tied to the relationships shared with significant others (i.e., family and close friends) and place experiences in that occur in the presence of others*” (Lee, Kyle & Scott, 2012). Hidalgo and Hernandez (2001) claimed that the social components of place attachment are more significant than the physical ones (e.g., landscapes, scenery), but other academics have stressed that both physical and social components to be significant for the place attachment development (Eisenhauer, Krannich & Blahna, 2000).

#### 4.3.3. SELF-DESTINATION INTEGRATION

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Tourists claimed that they tend to identify themselves with the destinations they love, denoting the crucial impact of loved destinations on their existing as well as desired identities. This finding is in accordance with that of brand love (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006; Ahuvia, Batra, & Bagozzi, 2008; Batra et al., 2012; Rauschnabel & Ahuvia, 2014). The self-destination integration component has to do with the match between tourist’s self (current or desired) identity and destination identity/characteristics or in other words it is based mainly on the tourist’s direct relationship with the loved destination and its unique characteristics that reflect (parts of) tourists’ identity. Destination love encompasses an integration of the tourist’s self and his/her most loved/favorite/preferable destination, so that destination becomes an essential part of his/her identity.

In the literature, it has been proved that tourists identify with places. This means that tourists can feel that they belong to a place or the place “belongs” to them (Kneafsey, 1998). Place identification is formed by the physical dimensions of the place itself and the social environment linked with it (Twigger-Ross & Uzzell, 1996; Twigger-Ross, Bonaiuto & Breakwell, 2003). Places may influence the process of identification directly through their physical, social, personal and cultural environments (Cuba &



Hummon, 1993). In other words, the process to identify a person with a place is a product of both the qualities of places and the characteristics and relations of people to places (Cuba & Hummon, 1993). Like with other people and activities, when people identify with places, and thus with an integral part of their social world, it means that they try to interpret themselves by using the environment to symbolize or situate their identity (Weigert, 1981; Proshansky et al., 1983; Cuba & Hummon, 1993). Places can play a significant role in forming personal identities, and thus differentiate the self from others, as well as social identities- groups of common attributes linked with people of a given social category (Goffman, 1963). Moreover, long-term stay at the place can also generate place identity, specifically in creating sentimental attachment and a sense of home (Cuba & Hummon, 1993).

Academics have proved that people may use places to forge a sense of attachment or home (Cuba & Hummon, 1993). Place identification usually entails emotional ties to place, but it can also entail a sense of shared interests and values (Cuba & Hummon, 1993). This identification with place is usually experienced by people as feeling “*at home*”, comfortable, familiar, and “*really me*” when being there (Relph, 1976; Seamon, 1979; Rowles, 1983), as well as belonging by affiliating the self with significant locales (Cuba & Hummon, 1993). Familiarity with a destination (e.g., previous visits, same spoken language, familiar food, customs etc) gives tourists confidence and results in repeat visitations of the destination, since conservative holidaymakers tend to return to their traditional seaside resort year after year (Holloway, 2004).

Previous studies have claimed that through automatic non conscious processes, closer relationships generate a profound integration of the relationship partner into the self (Aron, Aron, Tudor & Nelson, 1991; Aron, Aron & Smollan, 1992; Aron & Aron, 1996; Aron & Fraley, 1999; Aron, 2003; Lewandowski, Aron, Bassis & Kunak, 2006; Reiman & Aron, 2009; Rauschnabel & Ahuvia, 2014). In branding, academics have demonstrated that close consumer-brand relationships entail the inclusion of a brand into consumer’s self as well (Ahuvia, Batra & Bagozzi, 2008; Reiman & Aron, 2009; Reimann et al., 2012; Batra et al., 2012; Rauschnabel & Ahuvia, 2014). As a brand becomes part of an individual’s self, the closer the emotional tie will be (Malär et al., 2011). Consumers purchase and use brands that help them to shape their self-identities (Malär et al., 2011), as well as to enable them to determine their position in



their social environment (Sprott et al., 2009; Leventhal, Wallace, Buil & de Chernatony, 2014), by integrating the brand's characteristics into their own identity (Becerra & Badrinarayanan, 2013).

In interpersonal love, the lover and the beloved one integrate identities to a significant extent (Batra et al., 2012). In brand love, it is proved that respondents merge their loved object into their selves, which constitutes a central aspect to non-interpersonal love (Batra et al., 2012). Moreover, according to Carroll and Ahuvia (2006), brand love entails integration of the brand into the consumer's sense of identity. Aron and Aron (1986) support that love is the inclusion of others in the self. This means that a person should become part of another person in order to feel loved (Albert & Merunka, 2013). Ahuvia (1993) adapted the theory of Aron and Aron (1986) to marketing and suggested that *"when a brand reaches both a high real and desired level of integration with the consumer's sense of self, that consumer feels love for the brand"* (as cited in Albert & Merunka, 2013:16). As it concerns the tourism context, self-destination integration has been proved to be a major aspect of love, as well (e.g., Tsai, 2014; Lee & Hyun, 2016; Andriotis et al., 2020). The self-destination integration component includes the following:

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#### 4.3.3.1. Self-expansion

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A person achieves self-expansion by acquiring new skills, perspectives, knowledge, abilities, and insights. In personal relationships, self-expansion is acquired by sharing experiences and activities with partners (Aron, Norman, Aron & Lewandowski, 2003). Moreover, according to Self-Expansion Model, self-expansion is assisted by the inclusion of the other in the self (Aron, Aron, Tudor, & Nelson, 1991). This process involves the mixture of self on others' self (through exchanging of resources, characteristics, experiences and skills) that results in self-expansion (Lewandowski & Aron, 2002; Lewandowski, Aron, Bassis & Kunak, 2006; Aron, Lewandowski, Mashek & Aron, 2013; Mattingly & Lewandowski, 2013).

People might claim that through their romantic relationships they become better persons. Moreover, individuals in order to "broaden their horizons" they are engaged in novel and challenging experiences, which contribute to their



self-expansion (Mattingly & Lewandowski, 2013). Individuals have an inherent motive to self-expand. Through self-expansion, individuals desire to enhance their potential efficacy (Aron & Aron, 1996; Aron, Aron & Norman, 2001), by acquiring new resources, augmenting existing self-aspects or rediscovering previously neglected parts (Gordon & Luo, 2011) of their self-concept (Lewandowski & Bizzoco, 2007; Nardone, 2012) that at the end will contribute to their goal achievements (Aron, Norman & Aron, 1998). People increase their potential efficacy by creating close relationships that offer them resources (material or social, such as information, friendships, networking, social support, possessions), perspectives (the way people comprehend and analyze the world), capabilities and identities (person's memories and characteristics). Moreover, people expand their selves by including the others into themselves through their close relationships. The self is perceived as the content or the knowledge of who we are (Aronson, Wilson, Akert & Fehr, 2007). When being in a close relationship, a person includes the other in his/her self by making each other resources available to the other and incorporating the other's perspectives and identities to the self (Aron, Aron, Tudor & Nelson, 1991; Aron & Aron, 1996; Aron, Mclaughlin-Volpe, Mashek, Lewandowski, Wright & Aron, 2004). The closer the relationship, the higher the inclusion of the other in the self (Aron & Fraley, 1999). In other words, people become cognitively intertwined by their partners' identities, resources, capabilities and perspectives (Agnew, Van Lange, Rusbult, & Langston, 1998; Aron, Norman & Aron, 2001; Aron, Mashek, & Aron, 2004). People in relationships can also participate in activities that are new, challenging, interesting and exciting (i.e. self-expanding) which in turn enhance their relationship quality (e.g. Aron, Norman, Aron, McKenna & Heyman, 2000). In the literature, self-expansion has been studied in a romantic relationships context (Mattingly & Lewandowski, 2013). However, according to Mattingly & Lewandowski (2013) self-expansion is not a pure romantic interpersonal phenomenon, rather it can be achieved in a nonrelational domain as well (through hobbies, activities, spiritual experiences and workplace settings). Much like falling in love (Aron et al., 1995), individuals who are participating in new, exciting, and interesting activities



can achieve self -expansion through learning new things, acquiring knowledge and obtaining new perspectives, and thus they enhance their ability to accomplish new things (Mattingly & Lewandowski, 2013) and get various intrapersonal benefits (Aron & Aron, 1986; Aron, Lewandowski, Mashek & Aron, 2013).

A tourist destination can be considered as a partner in the traveling experience since *“destinations are rich in terms of experiential attributes, and the potential to evoke an emotional response is even greater”* (Otto & Ritchie 1996, as cited in Hosany & Gilbert, 2010: 515). Broomhall, Pitman, Majocho and McEwan (2010) argued that traveling offers the opportunity for lifelong learning. Similarly, Kuh (1995) has also stressed that traveling can be perceived as a powerful contributor to generic skill development. Moreover, Werry (2008) noted that traveling gives tourists the opportunity for non-vocational learning about other cultures, history, places, customs and people. Learning and education contribute to self-development, through tourists' involvement with hosts or the site (Falk, Ballantyne, Packer & Benckendorff, 2012). Nowadays, learning is also taking place outside schools and universities through 'free-choice' learning, such as the internet or/and travel experiences (Estabrook, Witt & Rainey, 2007; Falk et al., 2012). Travel can foster the development of tourists' skills and knowledge (Falk et al., 2012). Pearce and Foster (2007) found that the most commonly developed skill through travelling was effective communication skills.

Therefore traveling to (new) destinations and exploring them as well as learning new things and acquiring new knowledge while being there can create self-expansion because the experiences are novel for the individuals and potentially challenging as well as interesting.

In psychology, academics point that *“if self-expansion is a fundamental motivation within relationships, then individuals' perceptions of a relationship's ability to provide self-expansion in the future would be especially important. These perceptions would seem particularly relevant to decisions concerning faithfulness within the relationship”* (Lewandowski, 2006: 392).



#### 4.3.3.2. SELF-IDENTITY CONCEPT

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Visiting distant or cultural/historical or well-known tourist destinations may give tourists prestige in the eyes of their acquaintances and friends or even in their own eyes. Various academics (e.g., Grubb & Hupp, 1968; Hamm & Cundiff, 1969; Sirgy, 1982) describe self-identity as follows:

- a. *real/current/actual self-identity or how people see/perceive themselves*
- b. *ideal self-identity or how people would like to see/perceive themselves*
- c. *ideal social self-identity or how people would like others to see/perceive them.*
- d. *Social self-identity or how people think others perceive them*

Breakwell (1986) claims that the primary principle of identity is the establishment of a sense of personal uniqueness. Moreover, the social and physical attributes of destination can be inwardly subsumed to build a sense of being (Gu & Ryan, 2008). By investigating the useful construct of tourists' self-concept, tourism marketers can gain insights in understanding and explaining tourists' choice behavior. It has been proved in the literature that consumers opt for products or brands that are much alike to how they perceive or would desire to perceive themselves (Landon, 1974; Sirgy, 1982; Malhotra, 1988). Self-concept (also referred to the literature as self-image) has been described as "*the totality of individual's thoughts and feelings having reference to himself as an object*" (Rosenberg, 1979: 7). In first studies of self-concept, academics conceptualized it as a unidimensional construct and treated self-concept as the actual self-concept, whereas later academics conceptualized it as two-dimensional construct including actual as well as ideal self-concept (Malhotra, 1988). Sirgy (1982) has treated self-concept as multidimensional, moving beyond the duality of the concept. Sirgy (1982) proposed that self-concept consists of : (1) actual, (2) ideal, (3) social self-concept and (4) ideal social self-concept. Self-congruity can be perceived as a natural extension of self-concept (Usakli & Baloglu, 2010). The main hypothesis in the self-congruity theory is that a consumer tends to choose products or brands that match to one's self-concept. This hypothesis suggests that the higher the degree of congruence, the greater the possibility of intention to buy (Usakli & Baloglu, 2010). Love for specific objects can be



linked with self-expression (e.g., who we are as individuals and our preferences and impulses) as well as the realization of what we would like to be (Ahuvia, 2005). In addition, consumers usually choose specific brands that may reflect their personality. According to Kapferer (2008: 20) “*we judge ourselves on certain choices*” so that our social identity is usually shaped around the brands we wear or choose to buy and consume.

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#### 4.3.3.3. SELF-CONGRUITY

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In marketing it has been acknowledged that when a brand encompasses values and characteristics that are congruent with the consumers’ belief system and enhance consumer’s self- image, and when a brand is related to powerful and meaningful mental representations, this consumer-brand relationship can become a strong, enduring and powerful love relationship (Kaufmann, Loureiro & Manarioti, 2016). Moreover, according to Japutra, Ekinci & Simkin (2014), when the brand posits congruity with consumers’ self-image (actual, ideal and social), the bonding will be stronger. It is obvious that consumers love the brands that represent their actual or desired identities and with which they keep a bond based on cognitive schemata and representations (Park et al., 2010).

In the tourism context, it has been argued that when tourists match themselves with the characteristics/image of destination then there is self-congruity (Sirgy & Su, 2000). The greater the match between the tourist’s self and the destination’s image/characteristics, the more likely that the tourist forms a favorable attitude toward that destination (Murphy et al., 2007).

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#### 4.3.3.4. Life meaning & intrinsic rewards

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When participants were articulating love towards tourism destinations they were referring almost exclusively to intrinsic rewards (e.g., this place makes life worthliving, this place is inherently important for me, this place makes my life meaningful) and this is also in line with Batra’s et al. (2012) findings about loved





brands. “*There is a common distinction between performing an act ‘to get something’ (extrinsic rewards) as opposed to doing it because ‘you love it’ (intrinsic rewards)*” (Babin, Darden & Griffin, 1994: 645).

#### 4.3.4. NOSTALGIA & FREQUENT THOUGHTS

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Nostalgia has been identified as a facet of consumer-brand relationships (Fournier, 1994; Alvarez & Fournier, 2016). According to Alvarez and Fournier (2016), strong consumer-brand bonds can have the form of childhood partners that evoke nostalgic memories. Nostalgic attachment is about reminding individuals with a phase of their life or individuals’ thoughts of a brand that contain/trigger personal memories (Fournier, 2009). Nostalgia is perceived a universal catchword for looking back, reminiscing, reflecting on distinctive past experiences (Chhabra, Healy & Sills, 2003; Seehusen et al., 2013). In other words, nostalgia is “*a sentimental longing or wistful affection for the past*” (New Oxford Dictionary of English, 1998: 1266). Furthermore, according to Merchant, Latour, Ford and Latour (2013: 151), nostalgia includes both cognitive and affective elements and can be seen as a multi-dimensional experience, “*a reflection on the past, comprising of a mix of memories and multiple emotions*”.

The recollection of meaningful personal memories usually elicits nostalgia (Seehusen et al., 2013). People are nostalgic about old ways of life, old experiences, old good times/memories and they desire to relive them in the form of tourism, at least temporarily (Chhabra, Healy & Sills, 2003). Lowenthal (1990:4) states that “*if the past is a foreign country, nostalgia has made it a foreign country with the healthiest visitor trade of all*”. Laypersons conceive nostalgia as a primarily positive, social, and past-oriented emotion (Hepper, Ritchie, Sedikides & Wildschut, 2012). Nostalgia appears when individuals think of a typically fond, meaningful memory, feel sentimental (most often happy) with a tinge of longing (Seehusen et al., 2013). According to some other academics, nostalgia can evoke both positive and negative emotions (Holak & Havlena, 1992). By recalling memories from the past, individuals feel warmth, delight and affection (Holak & Havlena, 1998), but simultaneously, they experience a feeling of sadness and loss simply because their past cannot be regenerated (Holak & Havlena, 1998). Batcho (1998) argues that nostalgia prone



individuals attain a high capacity for emotion. In the literature, nostalgia is perceived by academics in different ways, such as a preference for the past (Holbrook & Schindler, 1991), a positive emotion (Wildschut, Sedikides, Arndt & Routledge, 2006), a negative emotion (Belk, 1990), or a combination of both positive and negative emotions (Holakand & Havlena, 1998). Nostalgia can influence consumers' attitudes and preferences for numerous products or services, as well as enhance perceptions of social support, reduce loneliness and fulfill a consumer's need to belong (e.g., Holbrook, 1993; Holbrook & Schindler, 2003; Braun-LaTour, LaTour, & Zinkhan, 2007; Zhou, Sedikides, Wildschut & Gao, 2008; Loveland, Smeesters & Mandel, 2010; Merchant et al., 2013; Davalos, Merchant, Rose, Lessley & Teredesai, 2015). In the literature of place attachment, it has been found that tourists' emotional bond toward a place is due, partially, to previous interactions and memories that evoke emotions and anticipation for future interactions (Milligan, 1998; Rosenbaum, 2006; as referred to Ortiz & Harrison, 2011). In the literature of marketing, Albert et al. (2008) proposed memories as one of brand love dimensions. According to Albert et al. (2008), brand memories are evoked by the brand and are linked to sentiments of nostalgia. This can be seen as an important element of non- interpersonal love, because there is no sign of it in the human love theories (Maisam & Mahsa, 2016). Furthermore, Langner et al. (2016) stated that highly relevant emotional memories stemming from consumers' personal experiences with the product or brand could be even more accessible and diagnostic to individuals than pure brand or product usage satisfaction as well as cognitive information. Moreover, in line with Batra et al. (2012) who found that having frequent thoughts about a brand is an essential aspect of brand love, tourists also claimed that they do have frequent thoughts about loved destinations.

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#### 4.3.5. LOVE STEMMING FROM LOCALS

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In tourism literature, the study of locals and tourist emotional relationships is very limited concerning the theoretical development and testing. Locals constitute a crucial part of the place and, by extension, visitors' experiences (Freire, 2009) and play a



central role in the place branding process (Zenker, Braun & Petersen, 2017). Traditionally, relationships between locals and tourists are limited to trivial encounters or “functional exchanges”, as locals and tourists within the context of travel destinations are usually perceived as being separate from each other, having little in common (Aramberri, 2001; Stokowski, 2002; Woosnam, Norman & Ying, 2009). However, locals and tourists are inextricably connected, since when being on holidays tourists interact with locals in everyday life activities (Zhang, Inbakaran & Jackson, 2006).

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#### 4.3.5.1. ANTHROPOMORPHISM

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In this study, tourists seem to anthropomorphize destinations through locals. The destination becomes a means of sharing values, experiences and knowledge, imbued with personal and cultural characteristics, by which personal inter-relationships between locals and tourists are reinforced, engraved in the mind and heart of individuals. It is actually the sharing that possesses importance for developing interpersonal kind of destination love. Tourists showed a tendency to engage in destination anthropomorphism, as they applied human attributes to destinations (e.g., welcoming, hospitable destination through locals). This is in line with findings in marketing literature showing that consumers apply human characteristics, personalities and intentions to brands and products (Sundar, 2004; Aggarwal & McGill, 2007; Epley, Waytz, Akalis & Cacioppo, 2008; Chandler & Schwarz, 2010; Waytz et al., 2010a; Delbaere, McQuarrie & Phillips, 2011; Landwehr, McGill & Herrmann, 2011; Kervyn, Fiske & Malone, 2012; Puzakova, Kwak & Taylor, 2013; Hart, Jones & Royne, 2013; Rauschnabel & Ahuvia, 2014; MacInnis & Fokes, 2017) especially in the conceptualization and validation of the brand-relationship concept (Fournier, 1998; as cited in Hegner et al., 2017).

Epley, Waytz and Cacioppo (2007: 864) define anthropomorphism as “*the tendency to imbue the real or imagined behavior of non-human agents with humanlike characteristics, motivations, intentions, or emotions*”. In other words, “*attributing any human trait to a nonhuman entity constitutes anthropomorphism*” (Rauschnabel & Ahuvia, 2014:375). Individuals anthropomorphize an object, a product or a brand by perceiving them as having human characteristics (Waytz et al., 2010a; Landwehr et



al., 2011; Rauschnabel & Ahuvia, 2014). Brand anthropomorphization triggers human schemas like knowledge about specific brand attributes created on the basis of previous experiences (Kwak, Puzakova & Rocereto, 2015). Brand or object humanization constitutes a vehicle of consumer's self-expression, since it helps him/her to articulate and project individual aspects that may be desirable to influence, or reflect the influence of a social relationship (Swaminathan, Stilley & Ahluwalia, 2009; Ahuvia, 2015; Delgado-Ballester et al., 2017).

Anthropomorphism has been found to ameliorate consumer evaluations of a product (e.g., Epley et al., 2008; Hart et al., 2013), increases the sense of bonding between the consumer and the anthropomorphized object (Sundar, 2004; Hart et al., 2013) as well as cognitive fluency (Delbaere et al., 2011), where cognitive fluency is the ease or difficulty of a cognitive process (Rauschnabel & Ahuvia, 2014). When consumers have high cognitive fluency, they feel a sense of intuitive fit with the product, whereas in low cognitive fluency situations, they feel frustrated (Aggarwal & McGill, 2007; Belke et al., 2010; Rauschnabel & Ahuvia, 2014). In addition, anthropomorphism may increase the desire for further brand usage (Rauschnabel & Ahuvia, 2014), since it has been found that people who anthropomorphize objects keep them longer (Chandler & Schwarz, 2010).

Thus it is likely for people through anthropomorphism, by applying activated human schemas, to develop love emotions or relationships for brands, since they tend to evaluate a humanized entity like a specific brand similar to how they evaluate other people (Kim & McGill 2011; Aggarwal & McGill 2012) and make brands more appropriate relationship partners, thus promoting and facilitating closer relationships (Rauschnabel & Ahuvia, 2014; Hegner et al., 2017). Consumers who have a strong brand love generally like it as well, whereas consumers can simply like a brand without strongly loving it (Rauschnabel & Ahuvia, 2014). This can be happened because consumers may value the brand's functional quality, but not anthropomorphize it (Rauschnabel & Ahuvia, 2014).

Likewise, since destinations are abstract entities and difficult to be fully understood by tourists, they place them in the human category, by giving them locals' characteristics, traits or emotions and see them as people and thus more plausible relationship partners. This human transformation of destinations could constitute a fundamental dimension of destination love.



#### 4.3.5.2. EMOTIONAL SOLIDARITY THEORY

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Another theory approach, which, apart from anthropomorphism, can describe the development of intimate relationship between tourists and locals is emotional solidarity theory. The theory of emotional solidarity, which is rooted in classical sociology and created by Emile Durkheim ([1915]1995), constitutes a feasible framework to apply in explaining such potential intimate relationship between locals and tourists in a tourist destination (Woosnam & Norman, 2010).

Durkheim argued that when people share similar beliefs and behaviors, are involved in similar activities, and interact with each other, then a feeling of emotional solidarity is forged (Woosnam & Norman, 2010). Hammarstrom (2005) acknowledges emotional solidarity as being the affective bond a person experiences with the other person(s) and is indicated by the perceived emotional closeness and degree of contact, for instance help or support between the people. Wallace and Wolf (2006) support that emotional solidarity constitutes a feeling that encompasses a sense of identification with other people as an outcome of a common value system.

The emotional solidarity theory is steadily increasing its involvement in the academic research in several fields, such as sociology, anthropology and social psychology (Bahr et al., 2004; Merz, Schuengel & Schulze 2007; Ferring et al., 2009; Clements 2013), as well as tourism (Woosnam & Norman, 2010; Woosnam, Shafer, Scott & Timothy, 2015; Woosnam, Dudensing & Walker, 2015; Hasani, Moghavvemi & Hamzah, 2016; Simpson & Simpson, 2017; Ribeiro, Woosnam, Pinto & Silva, 2018). Gronvold (1988) proposed a scale of the emotional solidarity construct, namely the Affectual Solidarity Scale, including five items: (1) understanding, (2) trust, (3) fairness, (4) respect, and (5) affection that one individual felt for someone else. In the marketing literature, solidarity between partners in distribution channels has been measured by single measures of (1) providing help, (2) sharing in problems, (3) committing to make improvements, and (4) making sacrifices (Sezen & Yilmaz, 2007; as cited in Woosnam & Norman, 2010: 4). Interaction among locals and tourists as well as sharing activities, beliefs and behavior can foster great cultural understanding and strengthen ties between locals and tourists (Derrett, 2003; Woosnam & Norman, 2010). This interpersonal interaction and sharing can be achieved through shopping at local stores, eating at local restaurants, visiting attractions such as museums and art galleries, utilizing natural resources and participating in festivals and special events,



among others (e.g., Snepenger, Reiman, Johnson & Snepenger, 1998; Fredline & Faulkner 2000, 2001; Derrett, 2003; Snepenger et al., 2007; Woosnam & Norman, 2010). In tourism field, Woosnam and Norman (2010) developed an Emotional Solidarity Scale (ESS) encompassing three dimensions and later, Woosnam et al. (2014) added some items : (1) welcoming visitors; (2) emotional closeness, including items such as “I feel close to some visitors I have met in [specific destination]”, “I have made friends with some visitors of [specific destination]”, “I feel affection toward visitors of [specific destination]” ; and (3) sympathetic understanding, including items such as “I share ideas with the visitors of [specific destination]”, “I have a lot in common with the visitors of [specific destination]”, “I understand the visitors of [specific destination]”, “I identify with visitors”. Up to that point, emotional solidarity had only been investigated from the perspective of locals, not taking into account how tourists perceived the relationship they formed with locals (Woosnam, Dudensing & Walker, 2015). Woosnam (2011) looked at both locals’ and tourists’ emotional solidarity with each other and they found locals showed a higher degree of emotional solidarity with tourists. On the other hand, Woosnam et al. (2015) found that tourists showed a higher degree of emotional solidarity with locals.

Ribeiro et al. (2018) found that emotional solidarity is an important predictor of attitudinal and behavior outcomes, such as satisfaction and loyalty. In sum, socio-cultural interaction between tourists and locals will not only cultivate possible amelioration of tourists’ attitudes toward the local culture and community, but also help in providing unique tourist experiences (Yu & Lee, 2014), which in turn will contribute to tourist’s satisfaction, loyalty and positive WOM (Sheldon & Abenoja, 2001; Zhang, Inbakaran & Jackson, 2006; Chandrashekar et al., 2007; Wearing, Stevenson & Young, 2009; Valle et al., 2011; Yu & Lee, 2014; Woosnam & Aleshinloye, 2013; Aleshinloye & Woosnam, 2015; Ribeiro et al., 2018). In addition, Hoffman and Low (1981) claimed that the most important variable in any decision to go back to a destination in the future is the tourist’s image of the friendliness of the locals.

Nowadays, it is more than obvious that locals and tourists form emotional bonds ,through interactions, shared beliefs as well as shared behaviors, and they are linked to each other , opposing to the past literature that has perceived them as separate from each other (Wearing & Wearing, 2001). Investigating emotions or affect is crucial for



a more holistic understanding of tourism experiences as well as interactions between residents and tourists (McIntosh, 1998). Several academics in the field of tourism and travel call for further research to examine locals-tourists' emotional relationships (e.g., Pizam, Uriely & Reichel, 2000; McGehee & Andereck, 2004).

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#### **4.3.6. PASSION AND ROMANTIC-DRIVEN BEHAVIOR**

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Romantic love and passionate love are kinds of love as it was extensively analyzed in the literature review. In the first two studies, tourists' passionate desire for the loved destination, as well as romantic feelings that are triggered by this loved destination were some of the hallmarks of destination love. For instance, some tourist's described their love for destination as a passionate desire to visit this destination, a sense of longing to visit this destination, or that they feel attracted by this destination, or that they spend their time passionately in this destination, they feel passionate about this destination or that this loved destination triggers their romantic feelings.

This passionate component/ dimension of love reflects the higher arousal, "hot" aspects of love and refers to the drives that lead to romance, as well as physical attraction, among others (Belk, Ger & Askegaard, 2003; Albert et al., 2008; Batra et al., 2012; Sarkar et al, 2012; Heinrich et al., 2012).

In the field of branding, Albert et al. (2008) as well as Batra et al. (2012) proved passion to be an important dimension/component of brand love, and the most managerially relevant one (Bauer, Heinrich & Albrecht, 2009).

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#### **4.3.7. LONG TERM RELATIONSHIP (LOYALTY & COMMITMENT)**

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Having a long term relationship with a destination was an essential aspect of destination love, analogous to that of brand love (Batra et al., 2012). In fact, it is this long lasting relationship that usually gives the loved destination an essential place in the tourist's heart and suggests that tourists are possibly to remain loyal to the destination in the future, alike in brands (Batra et al., 2012). Some tourists described





destination love as a long term relationship or/ and commitment to loved destinations. These tourists seem to be firmly committed to specific destination products, services, or/and experiences because they have created strong emotional preferences for them and thus feel an intense bonding or affection for a loved destination.

Numerous academics have recognized commitment as an important element of love (e.g., Sternberg, 1986; Shimp & Madden, 1988; Aron & Westbay, 1996; Fournier, 1998; Keh, Pang & Peng, 2007; Kamat & Parulekar, 2007; Lastovicka & Sirianni, 2011; Batra et al., 2012). Love acts as a commitment device (Gonzaga, Keltner, Londahl & Smith, 2001; Gonzaga, Turner, Keltner, Campos, & Altemus, 2006), which, across time, helps partners to maintain long-term bonds and form long term plans, among others (Sternberg, 1986; Dion & Dion, 1973; Hendrick & Hendrick, 1992; Hatfield & Rapson, 1993; Aron & Aron, 1998; Ellis & Malamuth, 2000). Buss (2006) suggests that love arises in the long-term context and acts to indicate long-term commitment.

Brand love is described as a customer-brand long term relationship (Fournier, 1998) and as *“the result of a consumer’s long-term relationship with the brand”* (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006: 81).

However, there are some other academics, who support that brand commitment and brand love are distinct concepts (e.g., Albert & Meruka, 2013), since commitment is actually the consumer’s willingness to keep a relationship with the brand (Fullerton, 2005); whereas love represents the consumer’s intense feeling towards the brand (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006). This study revealed that tourists’ destination love is considered as a long-lasting feeling or longing of relationship maintenance with loved destination.

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#### 4.4. TOURISTS’ TRAVEL BEHAVIOUR, DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC ATTRIBUTES ON DESTINATION LOVE (STUDY 1 & STUDY 2)

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In the following paragraphs, tourists’ travel behaviour, demographic and socio-economic attributes on destination love are presented. A review on market segmentation recognises that all segmentation approaches can be classified as being either a priori (commonsense) segmentation approaches (Mazanec, 1992; Dolnicar, 2006) or a posteriori (post hoc, data-driven) segmentation approaches (Mazanec,



1992; Dolnicar, 2006; Myers & Tauber, 2011). The names are indicative of the nature of these two approaches. In the first case destination management is aware of the segmentation criterion, is called observed variable, that will produce a potentially useful grouping (commonsense) in advance, before the analysis is undertaken (a priori). In the case of commonsense segmentation destination management informs the data analyst about the personal characteristics believed to be most relevant for splitting tourists into segments by using eg., age, gender, country of origin and generally demographics as a segmentation criterion. In the second case management relies on the analysis of the data (data-driven) to gain insight into the market structure and decides after the analysis (a posteriori, post hoc) which segmentation base or grouping is the most suitable one. Behavioural and psychographic variables such as destination satisfaction can be used as criteria for a posteriori segmentation. This is the reason those segmentation criteria are called unnoticed or unobserved variables, our study refers to. Behavioural criteria, such as first time or repeat visitation in our case, were be used as criteria for a posteriori segmentation.

In this research demographic segmentation is used as an a priori approach for market segmentation of visitors that develop destination love emotions, by using variables such as age (eg., Anderson & Langmeyer, 1982), gender, family life cycle (e.g., Fodness, 1992), income (e.g., Juaneda & Sastre, 1999), education, and nationality (e.g., Bowen, 1998) and socio-economic status (e.g., Moscardo, Pearce & Morrison, 2001). Moreover, a posteriori approach used also represented by the variable of first versus repeat visitation in order to segment the visitors who develop destination love.

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#### 4.4.1. STUDY 1

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The majority of respondents travel with friends (30,7%), followed by those who travel with family/family with children (25,3%), as a couple (24%) and alone (20%). 74,7% of respondents travel independently, 16% with organized groups and 9,3% with both. The striking majority prefers to travel during the summer (52%), 10,7% during winter, 10,7% during autumn and only 2,7% during spring. Their main purpose of travel is mainly leisure (77,3%) and only 4% business oriented. 18,7% combine business and leisure. Their kind of activities during their trips is mainly leisure and



recreation (40%), followed by visiting attractions/historical places/sightseeing (22,7%), explore nature/excercise/adventure seeking/sports (18,7%), get to know local customs, traditions and locals (10,7%), education/training/conferences (5,3%), visiting relatives and friends (1,3%) and shopping (1,3%). Their primary consideration for selecting destinations is visiting historical places/attractions (21,9%), explore nature/environment (16,4%), explore new places (15,1%), good weather (11%), cost/affordability (9,6%), visiting relatives and friends (8,2%), safety (4,1%), get in touch with local people and culture (2,7%), sports/adventure seeking (2,7%), relaxation (2,7%), accessibility (2,7%), conferences/training/business (1,4%), authenticity/originality of the place (1,4%). 94,7% of the respondents claimed that they do have a favorite destination for vacations and 42,3% claimed that their favorite destination is Greece. 82,5% claimed that their favorite destination is a summer destination and 10,5% winter destination. 92,7% of the respondents have visited their favorite destination and only 2,8% not. 37,5% have visited their favorite destination only one time, 10,4% two times, 4,2% three times, 6,3 % four times and 41,7% five or more times. The main source of information that influenced their decision to visit/learn/ get aware of their favorite destination is word of mouth/ good words from relatives and friends (51,5%), web sites/internet (20,6%), studies/conferences/school/books (14,7%), personal experience from a previous visit (4,4%), brochures and leaflets of travel agents (4,4%), advertisements on tv, radio, newspapers, cinema, magazines (1,5%). In a love continuum from 0 (not at all love) to 10 (absolute love), 40,6% stated that they absolutely love their favorite destination, followed by those 29% who indicated 9, 27,5% indicated 8 and 2,9% indicated 7. The majority of respondents defined destination love for their favorite destination as a positive emotional connection with destination (e.g., feel happy, relaxed, harmonious, safe, emotional attachment), followed by a bi-directional kind of love with locals, self-destination integration, self-love, nostalgia and long-term relationship respectively. 98,5% intend to visit their favorite destination again and have suggested it to relatives and friends.

As it concerns ideal destinations for vacations, 83,8% of the interviewers claimed that they do have an ideal destination for vacations and 65,5% claimed that their ideal destination is different from their favorite destination. Only 14% stated that their ideal destination is Greece and 32% stated that their ideal destination is a summer



destination. It is noteworthy that the striking majority of the participants (62,5%) has not visited their ideal destination yet. The main source of information that influenced their decision to visit/be aware of/learn about their ideal destination is word of mouth (33,3%), web sites and the internet (28,6%), advertisements on tv, radio, cinema, magazines, newspapers etc (19%), studies/conferences/books/school (11,9%), articles in tourism and travel magazines (4,8%) and brochures and leaflets of travel agents (2,4%). An interesting finding is that 51,2% of the respondents do not love their ideal destination. Of the 48,8% of respondents who love their ideal destination, only 21,1% love it absolutely (10). The majority of the respondents defined love for their ideal destination as self-destination integration, followed by love for locals and positive emotional connection. Finally, 83,3% of the respondents have suggested their ideal destination for vacations to their relatives/friends.

#### **4.4.1.1. Demographics, travel behavior and destination love dimensions**

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It should be stressed that most participants articulated destination love with more than one dimensions. However, in the following paragraphs, they were grouped based on their strongest love references about favorite/ideal destination. The results are presented below:

##### **4.4.1.1. SELF-LOVE**

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The notion of self-love was evident amongst 12% of the participants. Several key findings emerge from the socio-demographic profile of those who articulate destination love as self-love: 33,3% respondents were master graduates and 33,3% were PhD graduates as well. Furthermore, 77,8% were women and 22,2% were men of average age 40,7 years, and their average monthly income was 4.350 euros (SD=1202,08). 66,7% were single, 22,2% married and 11,1% divorced. The majority of these respondents came from the USA (33,3%), followed by Portuguese (22,2%), Italians (11,1%), Indians (11,1%), Russians (11,1%) and



Slovakians (11,1%). The main purpose of their trip was leisure (66,7%) or a combination of leisure and business (33,3%). The majority of them prefers to travel during the summer (33,3%) and autumn (22,2%). The striking majority travel independently (77,8%) and only 11,1% with organized groups or both (11,1%). They prefer to travel with a group of friends (55,6%) or alone (33,3%) and they get informed for destinations by relatives or friends (37,5%) as well as by conferences, studies and books (25,0%). Their primary consideration for selecting destinations for vacations is mainly visiting historical places/attractions (37,5%). Furthermore, their kind of activities in loved destination is mainly education, conferences and training (22,2%) as well as leisure and recreation (22,2%). Finally, while the majority of the respondents (3 respondents) have visited the loved destination for the first time, it is of great importance to note that the remaining respondents that represent repeat visitors have visited the loved destination several and many times, namely 9, 15 or 20 (16,7% respectively).

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#### 4.4.1.2. Love stemming from locals

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26 participants (34,66%) described destination love as a love stemming from locals. 36% of respondents were university/college graduates, 24% were master graduates, 16% basic/high school graduates, 12% students and 12% were PhD graduates. Furthermore, 46,2% were men and 53,8% were female of average age 42,42 years (SD=16,52), and their average monthly income was 2.666 euros (SD=1278,54). 69,2% were single and 30,8% married. The majority of these respondents came from the USA (15,4%), followed by French (11,5%), Italians (11,5%), Spanish (7,7%), British (7,7%), Dutch (7,7%) and Belgish (7,7%). The main purpose of their trip was leisure (80,8%) or a combination of leisure and business (19,2%). The majority of them prefers to travel during the summer (73,9%), followed by those who prefer during winter (17,4%) and autumn (8,7%). The striking majority travel independently (65,4%) and only 19,2% with organized groups or both (15,4%). They prefer to travel with family/family with children (30,8%) or alone (26,9%) and they get informed for destinations by relatives or friends (37,5%) as well as by conferences, studies and books (25,0%).



Their primary considerations for selecting destinations for vacations were mostly cost/affordability (20,8%) and explore nature/environment (20,8%), followed by visiting relatives and friends (12,5%), visiting historical places/attractions (12,5%), explore new places (12,5%) and good weather (12,5%). Furthermore, their kind of activities is mostly leisure and recreation (38,5%), as well as visiting attractions (19,2%) and adventure seeking/sports/explore nature (19,2%). Most of them (57,7%) were informed about their favorite loved destination from relatives and friends/wom (62,5%) and via the internet/websites (20,8%). Finally, while the majority of the respondents (42,1%) have visited the loved destination for the first time, it is of great importance to note that the remaining respondents that represent repeat visitors have visited the loved destination two (10,5%) or more times.

#### 4.4.1.3. Passion-romantic driven behavior

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5 participants (6,6%) described destination love as a passionate-romantic driven behavior towards the destination. 60% were master graduates, 20% basic/high school graduates, and 20% were PhD graduates. Furthermore, 60% were men and 40% were female of average age 40,8 years (SD=14,13). 40% were single and 60% married. The majority of these respondents came from the USA (40%), followed by Italians (20%), Chinese (20%) and Brazilians (20%). The main purpose of their trip was leisure (83,3%) or a combination of leisure and business (16,7%). The majority of them prefers to travel during the summer (50%). 100% of them stated that they usually travel independently (self-administered vacations). They prefer to travel with family/family with children (40%), with friends (40%) or alone (20%) and they get informed for destinations by relatives or friends (40%) as well as via web sites and the internet (20%), and brochures and leaflets of travel agents (20%). Their primary considerations for selecting destinations for vacations are mainly explore nature/environment (40%), and explore new places (20%), accessibility (20%) and originality/authenticity of the place (20%). Furthermore, their kind of activities is mostly leisure and recreation (80%), as well as visiting attractions (20%). Finally, while it is of great importance to note that respondents that represent repeat visitors have visited the loved destination , six (33,3%) or eight times (33,3%).



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#### 4.4.1.4. Self-destination integration

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29 participants (38,6%) described destination love as self-destination integration. 27,6% were master graduates, 27,6% university/college graduates, 20,7% were PhD graduates, 17,2% basic/high school graduates and 6,9% students. Furthermore, 48,3% were men and 51,7% were female of average age 41,65 years (SD=14,38) and of average monthly income 4275 euros. 55,2% were single, 37,9% married, 3,4% divorced and 3,4% widowed. The majority of these respondents came from the USA (13,8%), followed by Italians (10,3%), British (6,9%), Argentinians (6,9%), Spanish (6,9%), Germans (6,9%) and Slovaks (6,9%). The main purpose of their trip was leisure (72,4%), business (10,3%) or a combination of leisure and business (17,2%). The majority of them prefers to travel during the summer (59,1%), autumn (18,2%) and winter (18,2%). The striking majority travel independently (79,3%), and only 17,2% with organized groups or both (3,4%). They prefer to travel with friends (34,5%), alone (25,8%) or with family/family with children (24,1%) or alone (24,1%) and they get informed for destinations by relatives or friends (66,7%) as well as via conferences/studies/books/school (22,2%) or web sites and the internet (11,1%). Their primary considerations for selecting destinations for vacations are mainly visiting historical places/attractions (27,6%), explore new places (20,7%) and explore nature/environment (17,2%),. Furthermore, their kind of activities is mostly leisure and recreation (37,9 %), as well as visiting attractions (20,7%). Finally, 75% have visited their favorite loved destination more than one time and 25% one time.

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#### 4.4.1.5. Positive emotional connection

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34 participants (45,3%) described destination love as positive emotional connection. 29,4% were master graduates, 26,5% university/college graduates, 17,6% basic/high school graduates, 14,7% were PhD graduates, and 11,8% students. Furthermore, 52,9% were males and 47,1% were females of average age





39 years (SD=15,16) and of average monthly income 4877 euros. 55,9% were single, 38,2% married, 2,9% divorced and 2,9% widowed. The majority of these respondents came from the USA (14,7%), followed by French (11,8%), Germans (8,8%), Australians (8,8%), British (5,9%), Spanish (5,9%), Portuguese (5,9%), Irish (5,9%), Dutch (5,9%) and Colombians (5,9%). The main purpose of their trip was leisure (79,4%), business (5,9%) or a combination of leisure and business (14,7%). The majority of them prefers to travel during the summer (74,1%), autumn (11,1%) and winter (11,1%). The striking majority travel independently (85,3%), and only 11,8% with organized groups or both (2,9%). They prefer to travel with friends (32,4%), or with their partner/as a couple (29,4%) and they got informed about favorite destination by relatives or friends (44,1%) as well as via web sites and the internet (23,5%). Their primary considerations for selecting destinations for vacations are mainly visiting historical places/attractions (23,5%), explore nature/environment (17,6%), and good weather (17,6%). Furthermore, their kind of activities is mostly leisure and recreation (35,3 %), as well as visiting attractions/sightseeing (26,5%). Finally, 58,3% have visited their favorite loved destination more than one time and 41,7% one time.

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#### 4.4.1.6. Long term relationship with destination

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4 interviewers (5,3%), from USA, Italy, UK and Ireland defined destination love as a desire to go back again there or long term relationship. 50% were females, 50% were of basic/high school education, 25% college graduates and 25% master graduates. Moreover 50% were single and 50% were married of average age 54 years (SD=17,49). The main purpose of their trip is leisure (100%). The striking majority prefers to travel alone (50%), during the summer (66,7%) and independently (50%) or a combination of independent and organized vacations (50%). They got informed about favorite destination via web sites and the internet (75%), as well as brochures and leaflets of travel agents (25%). Their primary considerations for selecting destinations for vacations is mainly exploration of new places (50%), originality/authenticity of the place (25%) and business (25%).



Furthermore, their kind of activities is leisure and recreation (75%) and visiting historical places/attractions(25%).

#### 4.4.1.7. Nostalgia & frequent thoughts

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6 participants (8%) described destination love as nostalgia. 33,3% university/college graduates, 16,7% basic/high school graduates 16,7% were PhD graduates, 16,7% master graduates and 16,7% students. Furthermore, 50% were males and 50% were females of average age 33,83 years (SD=6,17). 66,7% were single and 33,3% married. These respondents came from Italy (16,7%), Australia (16,7%), Belgium (16,7%), Slovakia (16,7%), Colombia (16,7%), and Hungary (16,7%). The main purpose of their trip was leisure (50%), business (16,7%) or a combination of leisure and business (33,3%). 50% them prefers to travel during the summer and 50% autumn. The striking majority travel independently (83,3%), and only 16,7% with organized groups. They prefer to travel with friends (66,7%), or with their partner/as a couple (33,3%) and they got informed about favorite destination by relatives or friends (66,7%) as well as via web sites and the internet (16,7%) and conferences/studies/school/books (16,7%). Their primary considerations for selecting destinations for vacations are mainly visiting historical places/attractions (16,7%), explore nature/environment (16,7%), explore new places (16,7%), visiting relatives/friends (16,7%), get in touch with local people and their culture (16,7%) and good weather (16,7%). Furthermore, their kind of activities is mostly leisure and recreation (50%), as well as visiting attractions/sightseeing (16,7%), meet locals, get to know customs and traditions (16,7%) and adventure seeking/sports (16,7%). Finally, 80% have visited their favorite loved destination more than one time and 20% one time.

#### 4.4.2. STUDY 2

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##### *Demographic profile of the participants*

In total, 334 individuals took part in Study 2. 47,6% were males and 52,4% females. The majority of the participants was from the USA (20,1%), France (10,8%), the UK (10,5%), Greece (10,2%), Germany (9,9%), Italy (7,5%), Australia (5,7%), Spain



(3,9%), the Netherlands (3,9%), Canada (2,1%) and Austria (2,1%). The majority was master graduates (37,4%) and university graduates (35,9%), students (9,3%), basic/high school graduates (9%) and PhD graduates (8,4%). 53,2% were singles, 39,1% were married, 6,7% were divorced and 0,9% were widowed. Their average age was 36 years (SD=11,51) and their average monthly income 4386 euros.

91,6% of the participants claimed that they do have a favorite destination for vacations and 35,3% claimed that their favorite destination for vacations is Greece. Moreover, 75,9% claimed that they do have an ideal destination for vacations and only 5,7 % claimed that their ideal destination is Greece. 99,7% of the respondents have visited their favorite destination. 14,8% have visited their favorite destination only one time, 14,1% two times, 9,5% three times, 7,9% four times and the rest 53,6% five or more times. 64,4% of the participants have also visited their ideal destination. The striking majority (52,6%) has visited ideal destination only one time and 8,8% two times. 75% of the respondents claimed that they do love their favorite destination and 50,4% claimed that they absolutely love it (10), followed by 26% who indicated that they love their favorite destination with a 9 (in a love continuum from 0-not at all to 10 absolutely). It is remarkable that 80% of the respondents do not love their ideal destination for vacations. Only 20% of the respondents claimed that they do love their ideal destination and 46,2% of them claimed that they absolutely love it (10). 65,3% of the respondents had as a benchmark interpersonal love feelings when they defined/articulated destination love.

#### **4.4.2.1. SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES AMONG DESTINATION LOVE (DL), INTERPERSONAL LOVE (IL) AND BRAND LOVE (BRAND LOVE)**

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When it comes to love, a great majority of the participants (75%) claimed that they do love their favorite destination, whereas only 27,9% love a brand. 67,5% of male and 81,6% of female participants claimed that they do love their favorite destination. As it concerns their nationality, 100% of Chinese, Portuguese, Turkish, Mexicans, Colombians, Brazilians and Argentinians participants claimed that they do love their favorite destination, followed by 86,5% of the participants from the USA, 85,71% of



Canadians, 79,4% of Greeks, 78,94% of Australians, 77,14% of French, 76% of Italians, 71,42% of British, 66,6% of Spanish, 66,6% of Hungarians, 58,3% of Dutch, 57,14% of Austrians, 51,61% of Germans, 50% of Russians, 50% of Irish, 50% of Swedish and 33% of Finnish. It should be noted that the percentages of Chinese, Portuguese, Turkish, Mexicans, Colombians, Brazilians and Argentinians, Russians, Irish, Swedish and Finnish can not be representative, since the respondents are from one to six individuals for each country. As it concerns their educational level, 90,24% of master graduates claimed that they do love their favorite destination, followed by 81,48% of PhD graduates, 77,7% of university/college graduates, 46,6% of basic/high school graduates and 25,8% of students. Furthermore, 95,45% of divorced participants, 78,74% of married participants, 71,5% of singles and 33,3% of widowed participants claimed that they do love their favorite destination. The average age of the participants, who claimed that they do love their favorite destination is 38,35 years (SD=10,77) and their average monthly income is 4.709 euros. Taking into account only those individuals who love a destination, their profile can be summarized as followed:

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**DESTINATION LOVERS' PROFILE**

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75% of the participants claimed that they do love a destination. 42,3% of them were males and 57,7% females. They majority came from the USA (23,6%), Greece (11%), France (11%), the UK (10,2%), Italy (7,7%), Germany (6,5%), Australia (6,1%), Spain (3,3%), the Netherlands (2,8%), Canada (2,4%) and China (2,4%). Their average age was 38 years (SD=10,7), but more specifically the most popular age for people who love destinations was 29 years (5,7%) and 34 years (5,3%), 30 years (4,5%), and 35 years (4,5%). It should be highlighted that 75.2 % of people who love a destination are up to 46 years old. As it concerns their educational level, 45,1% of them were master graduates, 37% were university/college graduates, 3,3 % were students, 5,7% were high school graduates and 8,9% were PhD graduates. Their average monthly income is 4.709 euros and most of them were singles (49,8%),



followed by those who were married (41,2%), divorced (8,6%) and widowed (0,4%).

Concerning brand love, 26,92% of male and 28,73% of female participants claimed that they do love a brand. 100% of African participants (Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Gambia) as well as Romanians and Omanis love a brand, followed by 50% of Chinese, Brazilian, Belgish, Colombian, South African and Portuguese participants as well as 47,76% of USA participants, British (30,3%), Greeks (29,41%), Australians (26,31%), French (16,66%), Italians (16%), Dutch (15,38%), Canadians (14,28%), Spanish (7,69%) and Germans (6,4%). It should be noted that the percentages of 100% and 50% can not be representative, since the respondents are from one to six individuals for each country. As it concerns their educational level, 31% of basic/high school graduates as well as 41,3% of students, 25,21% of university graduates, 28% of master graduates and 21,42% of PhD graduates love a brand. Furthermore, 34,3% of singles, 24,4% of married, and 9% of divorced participants claimed that they do love a brand. Their average age is 34 years and monthly income 4187 euros. Taking into account only those individuals who stated that they love a brand, their profile can be summarized as followed:

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#### ***BRAND LOVERS' PROFILE***

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27,5% of the participants claimed that they do love a brand. From them, 45,7% were males and 54,3% females. The striking majority of the individuals who claimed that they do love a brand came from the USA (34,8%), followed by those who came from the UK (10,9%), Greece (10,9%), France (6,5%), Australia (5,4%), Italy (4,3%), China (3,3%), Germany (2,2%) and the Netherlands (2,2%). The average age was 34 years ( $SD=11,37$ ), but more specifically the most popular age of people who love brands was 28 years (8,7%), 19 years (5,4%), 21 years (5,4%), 29 years (5,4%) and 34 years (5,4%). It should be highlighted that 75% of people who love a brand are up to 39 years old. As it concerns their educational level, 38% of them were master graduates, 32,6% were university/college graduates, 13% were students, 9,8% were high school graduates and 6,5% were



PhD graduates. Their average monthly income is 4.187 euros and most of them were singles (64,1%), followed by those who were married (33,7%) and divorced (2,2%).

- ❖ **DL (Destination Love) versus IL (Interpersonal Love):** 26.3% of the respondents claimed that DL is as intense as IL, 40.5% claimed that DL is less intense than IL and 33.2% reported that DL is more intense than IL. Accordingly, 38.5% stated that DL is less complex than IL, 13.8%, that DL is as complex as IL and 47.7% that DL is more complex than IL. Moreover, 24.7% claimed that DL is as objective as IL, 9.7% that DL is less objective than IL and 65.6% that DL is more objective than IL. In addition, 17.4% stated that DL is as vague as IL, 31.2% that DL is less vague than IL and 51.4% that DL is vaguer than IL. Concerning the overall similarity between DL and IL, 37.2% claimed that IL and DL are not similar, 5.7% were neutral and 57.1% claimed that DL and IL tend to be similar.
- ❖ **DL (Destination Love) versus BL (Brand Love):** 11.8% claimed that DL is as intense as BL, 11.8% that DL is less intense than BL and 76.4% that DL is more intense than BL. Additionally, 21.2% believe that DL is as complex as BL, 10.6% that DL is less complex than BL and 68.2% that DL is more complex than BL. Furthermore, 32.1% consider DL as objective as BL, 51.2% that DL is less objective than BL and 16.7% that DL is more objective than BL. 27.1% of the participants conceive DL as vague as BL, 10.6% that DL is less vague than BL and 62.3% that DL is vaguer than BL. In addition, 40.7% perceive that DL and BL are different, 8.1% are neutral and 51.2% consider DL and BL as similar.
- ❖ **BL (Brand Love) versus IL (Interpersonal Love):** 78.4% of the respondents claimed that BL is not (at all) intense compared to interpersonal love, 14.4% conceive BL as intense as IL and 7.2% consider BL more intense than IL. 70.1% think that BL is less complex than IL, 16.5% are neutral and 13.4% that BL is more complex than IL. 69.1% of participants claimed that BL is more objective than IL, 17.5% that BL is as objective as IL and 13.4% that BL is less objective than IL. Moreover, 59.8% perceive BL less vague than IL,



10.3% that BL is as vague as IL and 29.9% consider BL as vaguer than IL. Finally, 58.8% of the respondents perceive that BL is different from IL, 29.9% consider that BL and IL tend to be similar and 11.3% are neutral.

#### 4.4.2.2. DIFFERENTIATION AMONG THE CONCEPTS OF LOVE, LIKE, EMOTIONAL ATTACHMENT AND PASSION

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- ❖ **Emotional intensity:** Participants were asked to indicate in an emotion continuum from 0 (not at all emotional intensity) to 10 (extremely high in emotional intensity) the emotional intensity of passion, like, emotional attachment and love. The most emotional intense concept was found to be love (M=9,21), followed by emotional attachment (M=8,67), passion (M=8,65) and like (M=4,8).
- ❖ **Complexity:** The same procedure was followed for the complexity of these concepts. Participants perceive love as the most complex concept (M=8,48), followed by emotional attachment (M=7,76), passion (M=7,1) and like (M=3,25).
- ❖ **Love versus emotional attachment:** the majority of the respondents (38,6%) considers that there is an overlap between the concepts of love and emotional attachment, meaning that the concepts are perceived as different but share some similar features/elements. Moreover, 36,8% of the respondents perceive that emotional attachment is part of love, meaning that love is a broader concept and includes the emotional attachment concept, 10,8% believe that emotional attachment and love are the same concept, 10,1% conceive that love is part of emotional attachment, meaning that emotional attachment is a broader concept and includes the love concept and only 3,6% think that love and emotional attachment are distinct concepts.
- ❖ **Love versus passion:** the striking majority of the participants (49,1%) perceives that passion is part of love, 35,4% of participants think that love and passion are different concepts but share some common features/elements, 6,1% perceive that passion and love are distinct concepts, 5,1% consider that love is part of passion and 4,3% think that passion and love are the same concept.





- ❖ **Love versus like:** Most of the respondents (37,2%) consider that like and love are distinct concepts and 36,8% think that like and love are different concepts but with some shared characteristics/features. 16,2% perceive like as a part of love, 5,8% love as part of like and only 4% love and like as the same concept.

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#### 4.4.2.3. MOST IMPORTANT DESTINATION LOVE DIMENSIONS

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- ❖ **First most important destination love dimension:** 29% of the participants consider self-love as the most important destination love dimension, followed by 28,2% as positive emotional connection with destination, 12,7% as love stemming from the locals, 12,2% as self-destination integration, 11,4% as passionate-romantic driven behavior towards destination, 4,5% as long term relationship with destination and 2% as nostalgia/frequent thoughts.
- ❖ **Second most important destination love dimension:** 22,3% of the respondents perceive positive emotional connection with destination as the second most important destination love dimension, 21,2% as nostalgia/frequent thoughts, 19,7% as long term relationship with destination, 18,7% as self-destination integration, 10,9% as love for people of the place/locals, 5,2% as passionate-romantic driven behavior towards destination and 2,1% as self-love.

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#### 4.4.2.4. Demographics & tourists' travel behavior on destination love dimensions

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It should be noted that most of the participants articulated destination love with more than one dimensions.

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##### 4.4.2.4.1. SELF-LOVE

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75 participants (22,45%) articulated destination love as self-love. Of them, 38 were males and 37 females. The majority came from the USA (21,3%), followed by French (16%), Germans (9,3%), Greeks (8%) and British (8%) as well as Australians (6,7%), Dutch (5,3%) and Italians (4%). The average age of the



participants who articulated destination love as self-love was 42,22 years (SD=10.56) and the average monthly income was 5.517 euros (SD=4.833). Moreover, the striking majority (52%) was master graduates, followed by university/college graduates (26,7%) and PhD graduates (20%). 47,3% were single, 36,5% married and 16,2 % divorced. Finally, the striking majority of self-lovers (86,5%) are repeat visitors (favourite destination) and 13,5% of self-lovers are first time visitors of the destination, with a much lower percentage than in the first study. Again, it is of great importance to note that repeat visitors have visited their favourite destination several times, specifically 10, 20 or 3 (10,8%, 9,5%, 8,1% respectively). Moreover, almost two out of the three respondents (65,3%) have visited at least 5 times their favourite loved destination.

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#### 4.4.2.4.2. LOVE STEMMING FROM LOCALS

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52 participants (15,56%) articulated destination love as love stemming from locals. Of them, 50% were males. The majority came from the USA (21,2%), followed by French (15,4%) and Italians (15,4%), Greeks (7,7%) Australians (7,7%) and Germans (7,7%) as well as British (5,8%) and Dutch (3,8%). The average age of the participants who articulated destination love as love stemming from locals was 41,46 years (SD=9,75) and the average monthly income was 5.315 euros (SD=6.192). Moreover, the striking majority (59,6%) were master graduates, followed by university/college graduates (30,8%), PhD graduates (3,8%), basic/high school graduates (3,8%) and students (1,9%). 37,3% were single, 56,9% married and 5,9 % divorced. Finally, the striking majority of these respondents (94,2%) are repeat visitors (favourite destination) and only 5,8% of them are first time visitors of the favourite destination. Again, it is of great importance to note that repeat visitors have visited their favourite destination several times, specifically 15, 5 or 6 (13,5%, 11,5%, 9,6% respectively). Moreover, 78,8% of these respondents have visited at least 5 times their favourite loved destination.



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#### 4.4.2.4.3. PASSIONATE/ROMANTIC DRIVEN BEHAVIOUR

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38 participants (11,37%) articulated destination love as passionate/romantic driven behaviour. Of them, 21,1% were males and 78,9% females. The majority was French (15,8%) and British (13,2%), followed by Greeks (10,5%), Italians (10,5%) and Americans (10,5%) as well as Australians (7,9%), Austrians (5,3%), Chinese (5,3%) and Dutch (5,3%). The average age of the participants who articulated destination love as passionate/romantic driven behavior was 34,55 years (SD=7,74) and the average monthly income was 4.146 euros (SD=3646). Moreover, 50% of the participants were master graduates, followed by university/college graduates (39,5%), PhD graduates (7,9%), and students (2,6%). 55,3% were single and 44,7% married. Finally, the striking majority of these respondents (94,7%) is repeat visitors (favourite loved destination) and only 5,3% of them are first time visitors of the favourite loved destination. Again, it is of great importance to note that repeat visitors have visited their favourite destination several times, specifically 2, 4 or 8 (15,8%, 13,2%, 13,2% respectively). Moreover, 57,9% of these participants have visited at least 5 times their favourite loved destination.

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#### 4.4.2.4.4. Self-destination-integration

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66 participants (19,76%) articulated destination love as self-destination integration. Of them, 34,8% were males and 65,2% females. Most of them were from the USA (27,3%), followed by French (16,7%), Italians (13,6%) as well as Greeks (6,1%), Australians (6,1%), and British (6,1%). The average age of the participants who articulated destination love as self-destination integration was 40,69 years (SD=9,2) and the average monthly income was 5.699 euros (SD=6312). Moreover, 43,9% of these participants were master graduates, followed by university/college graduates (37,9%), PhD graduates (13,6%), basic/high school graduates (3%) and students (1,5%). 40% were single, 47,7% married and 12,3% divorced. Finally, the striking majority of these respondents (86,2%) are repeat visitors (favourite destination) and only 13,8% of them are first time visitors of the favourite destination. Again, it is of great importance to note that repeat visitors have visited their favourite destination several times, specifically 10 or 20 (9,2%



for both). Moreover, 67,7% of these participants have visited at least 5 times their favourite loved destination.

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#### 4.4.2.4.5. POSITIVE EMOTIONAL CONNECTION WITH DESTINATION

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112 participants (33,53%) articulated destination love as positive emotional connection with destination. Of them, 42,9% were males and 57,1% females. Most of them were from the USA (28,6%), followed by Greeks (15,2%), British (12,5%) as well as Germans (6,3%), Australians (4,5%), and Spanish (3,6%). The average age of the participants who articulated destination love as positive emotional connection was 34,27 years (SD=10,31) and the average monthly income was 3.893 euros (SD=4445). Moreover, 41,1% of these participants were university/college graduates, followed by master graduates (36,6%), basic/high school graduates (9,8%), PhD graduates (6,3%) and students (6,3%). 64,5% were single, 30% married, 4,5% divorced and 0,9% widowed. Finally, the striking majority of these respondents (85,6%) are repeat visitors (favourite destination) and only 14,4% of them are first time visitors of the favourite destination. Again, it is of great importance to note that repeat visitors have visited their favourite destination mostly 2 or 3 times (18% and 12,6% respectively). Moreover, 45% of these participants have visited at least 5 times their favourite loved destination.

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#### 4.4.2.4.6. LONG TERM RELATIONSHIP WITH DESTINATION

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49 participants (14,67%) articulated destination love as long term relationship with destination. Of them, 36,7% were males and 63,3% females. Most of them were from the USA (22,4%), followed by French (12,2%), Italians (12,2%) as well as British (12,2%), Greeks (10,2%), Germans (10,2%) and Australians (8,2%). The average age of the participants who articulated destination love as positive emotional connection was 42,57 years (SD=10,83) and the average monthly income was 4.622 euros (SD=4310). Moreover, 44,9% of these participants were master graduates, followed by university/college graduates (38,8%), PhD graduates (8,2%), basic/high school graduates (6,1%), and students



(2%). 27,1% were single, 54,2% married, 16,7% divorced and 2,1% widowed. Finally, the striking majority of these respondents (95,9%) are repeat visitors (favourite destination) and only 4,1% of them are first time visitors of the favourite destination. Again, it is of great importance to note that repeat visitors have visited their favourite destination mostly 10, 6 or 15 times (18,4%, 14,3% and 12,2% respectively). Moreover, 91,8% of these participants have visited at least 5 times their favourite loved destination.

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#### 4.4.2.4.7. NOSTALGIA/ FREQUENT THOUGHTS

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46 participants (13,77%) articulated destination love as nostalgia/frequent thoughts. Of them, 30,4% were males and 69,6% females. Most of them were Greeks (19,6%), followed by Americans (13%), French (10,9%), British (10,9%), Italians (8,7%), Spanish (8,7%) and Australians (6,5%). The average age of the participants who articulated destination love as nostalgia was 36,89 years (SD=10,78) and the average monthly income was 3.128 euros (SD=2354). Moreover, 52,2% of these participants were master graduates, followed by university/college graduates (41,3%), and basic/high school graduates (6,5%). 47,8% were single, 43,5% married and 8,7% divorced. Finally, the striking majority of these respondents (80%) are repeat visitors (favourite destination) and 20% of them are first time visitors of the favourite destination. Moreover, 48,9% of these participants have visited at least 5 times their favourite loved destination.

#### 4.4.3. SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES OF TOURISTS' DEMOGRAPHIC AND BEHAVIOUR CHARACTERISTICS WITH



**RESPECT TO EACH DESTINATION LOVE DIMENSION BETWEEN  
STUDY 1 & STUDY 2**

Table 8: Self-love

<b>Tourists' characteristics</b>	<b>Study 1</b>	<b>Study 2</b>
<i>Gender</i>	women (77,8%)	both women and men (38 male and 37 female)
<i>Age</i>	middle age (average age 40,7 years)	middle age (average age 42,22 years)
<i>Education</i>	master graduates and PhD graduates (33,3% both categories)	master graduates (52%)
<i>Marital status</i>	Single (66,7%)	Single (47,3%)
<i>Monthly income</i>	4.350 euros (SD=1202,08)	5.517 euros (SD=4.833)
<i>Nationality</i>	USA (33,3%) followed by mainly Europeans (Portuguese, Italians, Russians, and Slovaks)	USA (21,3%), followed by Europeans (French, Germans, Greeks, British, Dutch, and Italians), as well as Australians
<i>Repeat visitation</i>	visited the destination several and many times, namely 9, 15, or 20	almost two out of the three respondents (65,3%) have visited at least 5 times the destination

Table 9: Similarities/differences of self-love between study 1 and study 2

	Gender	Age	Educational level	Marital Status	Monthly income	Repeat visitation	Nationality
Similarities		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Differences	✓						

Table 10: Love stemming from locals



<b>Tourists' characteristics</b>	<b>Study 1</b>	<b>Study 2</b>
<i>Gender</i>	46,2% men and 53,8% women	50% men and 50% women
<i>Age</i>	middle age (average age 42,42 years)	middle age (average age 41,46 years)
<i>Education</i>	36% university/college graduates, 24% master graduates	59,6% master graduates, 30,8% university/college graduates
<i>Marital status</i>	Single (69,2%)	Married (56,9% )
<i>Monthly income</i>	2.666 euros	5.315 euros
<i>Nationality</i>	USA (15,4%), followed by French (11,5%), Italians (11,5%), Spanish (7,7%), British (7,7%), Dutch (7,7%) and Belgish (7,7%).	USA (21,2%), followed by French (15,4%), Italians (15,4%), Greeks (7,7%) Australians (7,7%), Germans (7,7%), British (5,8%) and Dutch (3,8%).
<i>Repeat visitation</i>	42,1% first time visitors, the remaining respondents that represent repeat visitors have visited the loved destination two (10,5%) or more times.	5,8% first time visitors and 94,2% repeat visitors. 78,8% have visited at least 5 times their favourite loved destination.

Table 11: Similarities/differences of love stemming from locals between study 1 and study 2

	Gender	Age	Educational level	Marital Status	Monthly income	Repeat visitation	Nationality
Similarities	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓
Differences				✓	✓		

Table 12: Passionate/romantic driven behavior





<b>Tourists' characteristics</b>	<b>Study 1</b>	<b>Study 2</b>
<i>Gender</i>	60% men and 40% women	21,1% men and 78,9% women
<i>Age</i>	middle age (average age 40,8 years)	average age 34,55 years
<i>Education</i>	60% master graduates, 20% basic/high school graduates, 20% PhD graduates	50% master graduates, 39,5% university/college graduates
<i>Marital status</i>	40% single, 60% Married	Single (55,3%) and Married (44,7%)
<i>Monthly income</i>	-	4.146 euros
<i>Nationality</i>	USA (40%), followed by Italians (20%), Chinese (20%) and Brazilians (20%)	French (15,8%), followed by British (13,2%), Greeks (10,5%), Italians (10,5%), Americans (10,5%) as well as Australians (7,9%), Austrians (5,3%), Chinese (5,3%) and Dutch (5,3%).
<i>Repeat visitation</i>	respondents that represent repeat visitors have visited the loved destination six (33,3%) or eight times (33,3%).	the striking majority (94,7%) is repeat visitors and only 5,3% of them are first time visitors. 57,9% have visited at least 5 times their favourite loved destination.

Table 13: Similarities/differences of passionate/romantic driven behavior between study 1 and study 2



	Gender	Age	Educational level	Marital Status	Monthly income	Repeat visitation	Nationality
Similarities						✓	
Differences	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓

Table 14: Self-destination integration

<b>Tourists' characteristics</b>	<b>Study 1</b>	<b>Study 2</b>
<i>Gender</i>	48,3% men and 51,7% women	34,8% men and 65,2% women
<i>Age</i>	middle age (average age 41,65 years)	middle age (average age 40,69 years)
<i>Education</i>	27,6% master graduates, 27,6% university/college graduates	43,9% master graduates, 37,9% university/college graduates
<i>Marital status</i>	Single (55,2%)	Married (47,7%) and Single (40%)
<i>Monthly income</i>	4.275 euros	5.699 euros
<i>Nationality</i>	USA (13,8%), followed by Italians (10,3%), British (6,9%), Argentinians (6,9%), Spanish (6,9%), Germans (6,9%) and Slovaks (6,9%).	USA (27,3%), followed by French (16,7%), Italians (13,6%), Greeks (6,1%), Australians (6,1%), and British (6,1%).
<i>Repeat visitation</i>	76,2% repeat visitors and 23,8% first time visitors.	86,2% repeat visitors, 13,8% first time visitors. 67,7% of these participants have visited at least 5 times their favourite loved destination.

Table 15: Similarities/differences of self-destination integration between study 1 and study 2



	Gender	Age	Educational level	Marital Status	Monthly income	Repeat visitation	Nationality
Similarities		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Differences	✓			✓			

Table 16: Positive emotional connection with destination

<b>Tourists' characteristics</b>	<b>Study 1</b>	<b>Study 2</b>
<i>Gender</i>	52,9% men and 47,1% women	42,9% men and 57,1% women
<i>Age</i>	average age 39 years	average age 34,27 years
<i>Education</i>	29,4% master graduates, 26,5% university/college graduates	41,1% university/college graduates, 36,6% master graduates
<i>Marital status</i>	Single (55,9%)	Single (64,5%)
<i>Monthly income</i>	4.877 euros	3.893 euros
<i>Nationality</i>	USA (14,7%), followed by French (11,8%), Germans (8,8%), Australians (8,8%), British (5,9%), Spanish (5,9%), Portuguese (5,9%), Irish (5,9%), Dutch (5,9%) and Colombians (5,9%).	USA (28,6%), followed by Greeks (15,2%), British (12,5%), Germans (6,3%), Australians (4,5%), and Spanish (3,6%).
<i>Repeat visitation</i>	58,3% repeat visitors, 41,7% first time visitors	85,6% repeat visitors and only 14,4% first time visitors. 45% of these participants have visited at least 5 times their favourite loved destination.

Table 17: Similarities/differences of positive emotional connection between study 1 and study 2



	Gender	Age	Educational level	Marital Status	Monthly income	Repeat visitation	Nationality
Similarities	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Differences							

Table 18: Long term relationship with destination

<b>Tourists' characteristics</b>	<b>Study 1</b>	<b>Study 2</b>
<i>Gender</i>	50% men, 50% women	36,7% men and 63,3% women
<i>Age</i>	54 years old	Middle Age (average age 42,57 years)
<i>Education</i>	50% High school graduates	44,9% master graduates, 38,8% university/college graduates
<i>Marital status</i>	50% Single, 50% married	Married (54,2%)
<i>Monthly income</i>	-	4.622 euros
<i>Nationality</i>	USA, Italian, UK, Irish	USA (22,4%), followed by French (12,2%), Italians (12,2%), British (12,2%), Greeks (10,2%), Germans (10,2%) and Australians (8,2%).
<i>Repeat visitation</i>	yes	95,9% repeat visitors, 4,1% first time visitors.

Table 19. Similarities/differences of positive emotional connection between study 1 and study 2

	Gender	Age	Educational level	Marital Status	Monthly income	Repeat visitation	Nationality
Similarities		✓		✓		✓	✓
Differences	✓		✓				

Table 20: Nostalgia

<b>Tourists'</b>	<b>Study 1</b>	<b>Study 2</b>



**characteristics**

<i>Gender</i>	50% men, 50% women	30,4% men and 69,6% women
<i>Age</i>	average age 33,83 years	average age 36,89 years
<i>Education</i>	33,3% university/college graduates	52,2% master graduates, 41,3% university/college graduates
<i>Marital status</i>	Single (66,7%)	Single (47,8%), Married 43,5%
<i>Monthly income</i>	-	3.128 euros
<i>Nationality</i>	Italians (16,7%), Australians (16,7%), Belgish (16,7%), Slovakiens (16,7%), Colombians (16,7%), and Hungarians (16,7%).	Greeks (19,6%), followed by Americans (13%), French (10,9%), British (10,9%), Italians (8,7%), Spanish (8,7%) and Australians (6,5%).
<i>Repeat visitation</i>	80% repeat visitors , 20% first time visitors	80% repeat visitors, 20% first time visitors. 48,9% of these participants have visited at least 5 times their favourite loved destination.

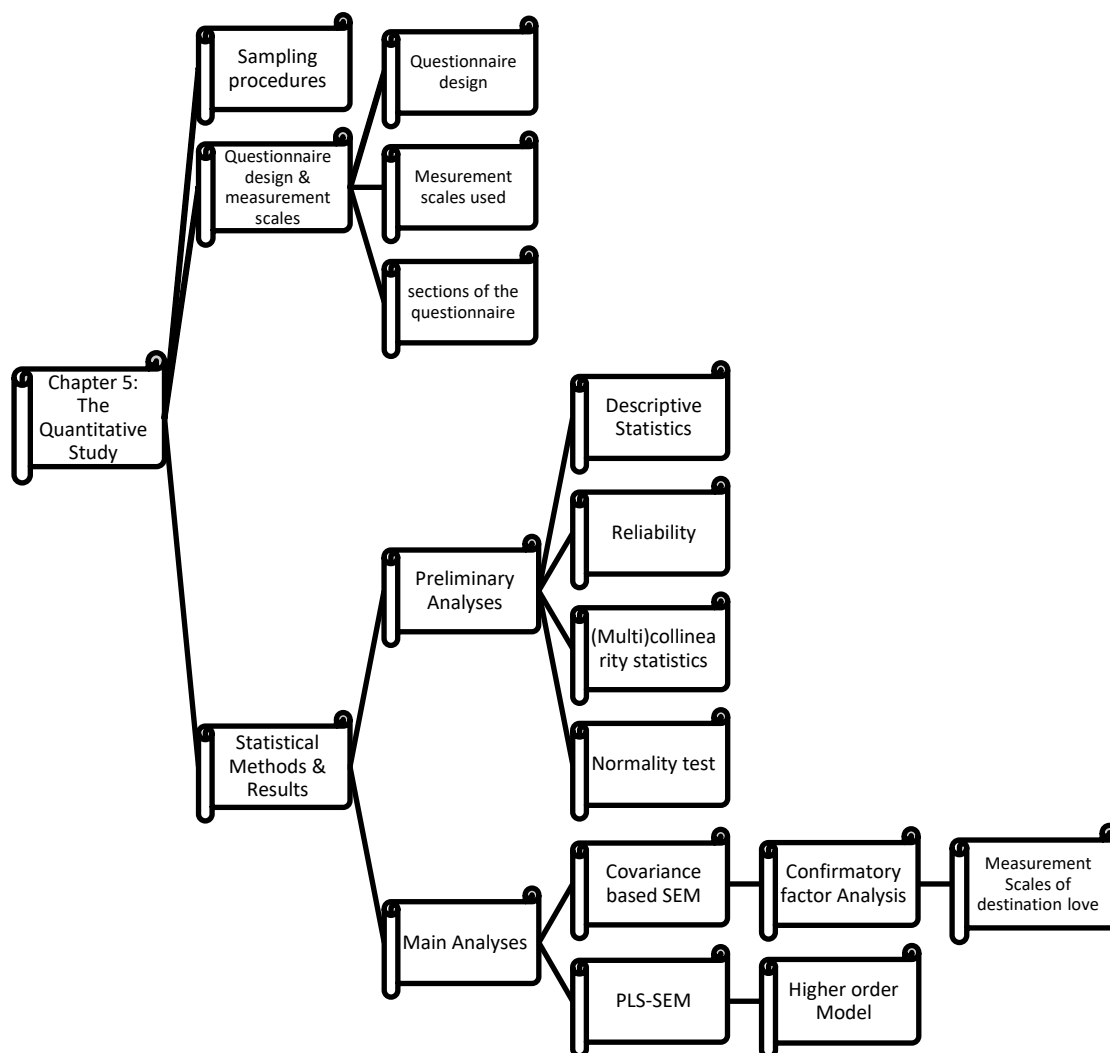
Table 21: Similarities/differences of nostalgia between study 1 and study 2

	Gender	Age	Educational level	Marital Status	Monthly income	Repeat visitation	Nationality
Similarities		✓	✓	✓		✓	
Differences	✓						✓



# CHAPTER FIVE: THE QUANTITATIVE STUDY (STUDY 3)

## PREVIEW OF CHAPTER FIVE





Tourism Marketing research differs from other types of research from the fact that it is characterized by a particularly high need of adaptation and low level of standardization due to tourism (products/services) complexity and multi-level nature (Kouremenos, 2003).

The previous chapters provided details about the theoretical and methodological procedure of the destination love conceptual framework foundation and development that set the basis for the quantitative research framework design and development. This chapter focuses on the research framework design and development of the third study, and more specifically the sampling procedures, the questionnaire design, the measurement scales used for this study, the analyses of the data (preliminary analyses, such as descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, collinearity and multicollinearity statistics and normality tests; and main analyses, such as confirmatory factor analysis and Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation modeling analysis), the theoretical justification for using these measurement scales and implementing these specific analyses as well as the results of the analyses (the emergence of destination love measurement scales and the higher order destination love model development are described in details). This chapter finally offers details about the theoretical establishment as well as the methodological validity and justification of destination love.

## 5.1. SAMPLING PROCEDURES

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Primary data were collected from tourists in Ancient Olympia, Athens and Santorini island in 2017, 2018 and 2019, across all seasons. Olympia, Athens and Santorini are amongst the most famous and visited destinations in Greece. Tourist study population was determined using EUROSTAT (1998) and WTO (1999) guidelines for conducting and processing a visitor survey in destinations. In detail, tourists' sample was composed by national and international tourists, aged more than 15 years old, who visited Olympia, Athens and Santorini island. Quota sampling as well as activity sampling procedures (activity sampling procedure like in study 1 and study 2) were implemented to gather primary data from tourists. Quotas were mainly based on the





nationality of tourists. More specifically, the primary focus of the researcher was to mostly include participants from the seven main nationalities of interest (France, Germany, Italy, USA, Australia, UK, Spain), which could give useful insights due to its multicultural richness. USA and Europe were chosen, since the striking majority of studies in brand love and destination brand love include participants from either Europe or USA (e.g., Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006; Albert et al., 2008; Batra et al., 2012; Swanson, 2017; Aro et al., 2018; Christou, 2018). Australians is the nationality of interest for many academic studies in tourism (e.g., Ryan & Huyton, 2000; Jago, 2003; Crouch, Oppewal, Huybers, Dolnicar, Louviere & Devinney, 2007; Ruhanen, Whitford & McLennan, 2015). However, individuals from Australia have never been investigated before about brand or destination love and it was thought that they could give extra insights on this complex emotion (individuals from a third continent definitely could contribute even more to the cultural diversity of the sample). Quota sampling is non-probability sampling and the technique of the non-proportional quota sampling was adopted in this study. In particular, the researcher set a minimum of sample number (above 45 individuals) from each of the main nationality categories (Bornstein, Jager & Putnick, 2013), and was not interested in having a number that will match the proportions of the population. Rather the researcher wanted to have a sufficient number of individuals from these seven nationalities in order to guarantee that these nationality groups are adequately represented in the population (Etikan & Bala, 2017). A minimum total sample N of 315 would be required for these seven main nationalities (Bornstein, Jager & Putnick, 2013). The total sample N of this study from these seven nationalities is 726, way larger than the threshold value of 315 individuals (Bornstein, Jager & Putnick, 2013). In marketing research, quota sampling technique has been used widely (Malhotra & Peterson, 2001). Slater & Yani-de-Soriano (2010: 1152) stress that “*quota sampling could produce acceptably correct and meaningful results comparable with those obtained by probability sampling in other countries, and that sameness of method of collection by no means assures comparable data for analysis*” [based on Webster’s (1966) argument]. Cumming (1990) also found comparable results between quota sampling and probability sampling and stated that quota sample surveys may be an acceptable alternative to probability sample surveys. Furthermore, according to Christou (1999), non-probability sampling and more specifically, quota sampling, shows more



flexibility and adaptation to the tourism research needs, in contrast to the probability sampling. Therefore, quota sampling is very popular in tourism research (Christou, 1999).

According to World Tourism Organization (1999), possible sites to conduct tourism surveys are: a) the entry /exit points of an area/town/city, b) means of transport, c) popular tourist attractions, and d) accommodation. More specifically, the questionnaire was distributed only in one individual per family or group (organized or not) in order to collect different opinions and avoid repetition or imitation. With this procedure, the risk of collecting large quantity but restricted quality data was avoided (e.g., collecting all the questionnaires from one specific group of tourists or from the same area spots at the same day) (Zouni & Kouremenos, 2008).

## 5.2. QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN AND MEASUREMENT SCALES

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### 5.2.1. QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN

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The questionnaire design followed three stages. Initially, a first version of the questionnaire was designed based predominately on primary data from study 1 and study 2 as well as questionnaires from several previous research studies regarding the variables under investigation (see Kozak & Rimmington, 2000; Heung & Cheng, 2000; Joppe, Martin & Waalen, 2001). Afterwards, the questionnaire was modified based on the academic suggestions of experts in tourism and marketing fields for the proper and accurate design of the questionnaire, as suggested by Kinnear & Taylor (1987), as well as Churchill & Iacobucci (2002). According to Kaynak and Macauley (1984: 90), the Delphi technique is “*a unique method of eliciting and refining group judgement based on the rationale that a group of experts is better than one expert when exact knowledge is not available*”. Additionally, Linstone and Turo (1975:574) describe the Delphi as “*a method of structuring a group communication process so that the process is effective in allowing a group of individuals as a whole to deal with a complex problem*”. In the third phase, a focus group session took place and it



adopted a semi-structured format, which allowed for variation in the order of questions; however the key topics covered remained the same. The focus group was consisted of 12 tourists, randomly selected from the research field. 5 males and 7 females, from seven different countries (UK, Germany, France, Italy, USA, Australia and Spain) within the broad age range of 26-72 years participated. The focus group session was conducted in a friendly environment, close to the Olympia's museum, with local drinks and refreshments as well as regional delicatessen provided to the participants before the focus group started, in order to meet each other informally. The procedure lasted approximately five hours and notes were taken by a person other than the moderator to ensure that a complete record would be available for the analysis. Key questions were relating to the participants' way of traveling, their emotions while traveling, their emotions about favorite/ideal destinations, the kind of people they perceived to be interested in loved destinations, their reasons for loving favorite/ideal destination, what they gain from their most favorite/preferable/loved destination, their knowledge about loved destination culture/people/customs/characteristics, their views and experiences relating to staying on the loved destination and what they felt or gained from their trip at loved destination as well as to what attracts people to their loved destination. There was then discussion on the types of experiences that were sought by the participants when visiting their loved destination, the most memorable experiences and the least memorable experiences at loved destination, as well as the overall impression from this destination. Subsequent discussion focused on products for sale and available services in the loved destination, the attractions visited, what was learned through the visit at most favorite/loved destination, the biggest advantage and disadvantage of their loved destination as a tourism destination and whether their experience with that destination met their expectations. Consistent with previous studies of the tourist experience, the focus group session followed the principles of the "*Laddering Technique*" used in marketing to further probe the responses of participants in order to elicit the deeper personal values gained from their experiences in the destination (Reynolds & Gutman, 1988). All these informations and insights gained from the focus group were incorporated in the questionnaire. Afterwards and as a final step, a pretest in 46 visitors was implemented. A random sample of 46 tourists was chosen from the sampling frame as a pretest group and personal interviews were conducted in



order to identify possible errors or omissions and to observe the general attitude of respondents towards the research instrument. At the same time, experimental studies (double loop learning) were carried out to tourists, who were asked to suggest possible alternatives concerning the expression of the items (in their native language as well). From the pretest, some really important issues came up and were taken into account in the final development and modification of the questionnaire. For example, the questionnaire was adapted to the cultural differences of tourists (translated in 5 different languages, namely English, German, French, Italian, Spanish), so that it is understood by all respondents, since some nationalities, such as Italians and Spanish-spoken people were facing more difficulties in understanding the questionnaire items in English. The original questionnaire was in English and it was translated by bilingual experts to the German, French, Italian and Spanish language. For the first step of the translation procedure, details for the purpose of the study as well as further clarifications for each of the study's item was given to translators by the researcher in order to efficiently adapt the terms in the selected languages. Afterwards, the backtranslation procedure was implemented to secure the validity of the survey instrument. More specifically, the translated questionnaires were given to four more bilingual experts, one per each language. The two versions of translations were then compared and adaptations were done-where it was needed (e.g., Werner & Campbell, 1970; Sinaiko & Brislin, 1973).

Additionally, the questionnaire was adapted to the cultural differences of tourists. In particular, in the German questionnaire, the Likert scales were adjusted in a way that the first box denotes the highest level and last box the lowest, unlike the other questionnaires. The reason for this adjustment was that for Germans, the first box (first box in Likert scale) denotes the best. Moreover, some minor but very important issues resulted and they were treated. These issues were related to the research measurement tool and more specifically, some words of the destination love dimensions (and their items) seemed to confuse respondents, resulting in their easier translation, according to the suggestions tourists gave to each of them. For example, the majority of respondents could not fully understand the term "destination" and preferred the word "place". Thus, destination was changed to place in all items of the questionnaire. Moreover, the respondents perceived the sampling procedure good,



since the time and place of their approach was regarded satisfactory, because they were just relaxing at research fields and it was considered as a pleasant break before continuing their journey. The time required to complete the questionnaire was approximately 15 to 20 minutes, causing no negative reactions or refusal to complete it, as the majority of tourists indicated that they were “filling” their free time. The overall impression gained from this pretest procedure was the willingness of tourists to participate in this study, as they considered that their opinion counts. Further, a short description of the study’s scope as well as the study’s academic affiliation were added at the first page of the questionnaire. Moreover, participants were ensured for their anonymity. Therefore, an eight-page structured questionnaire developed after extensive literature review and studies 1 and 2, Delphi technique with marketing experts, focus group, and pretest. By following the above mentioned procedures, we managed to have tourist customized/driven dimensions and items for this research study and to assure face and content validity.

Traditionally, it is argued that small-scale questionnaires receive higher response rates than the larger ones (Brown, 1965; Leslie, 1970). However, several academic studies have shown that the length of the questionnaire does not necessarily affect the response rates (Brown, 1965; Duncan, 1979; Layne & Thompson, 1981). Ostensibly, the content of the questions is more important than the length of the questionnaire (Berdie, Anderson & Niebuhr, 1986). In other words, an interesting research topic is more likely to cause higher response rates (Reid, 1942; Schwarz & Hippler, 1987; Churchill & Iacobucci, 2005). Regarding tourism research, Kouremenos (2003) emphasizes that the extensive questionnaires are acceptable as long as the time of tourists’ approach is chosen correctly, taking into account tourists’ willingness to “deal with something”, during their waiting time. From the 2.364 distributed questionnaires, in total, 1.008 filled the questionnaire (42.6% response rate), but 923 were finally usable for the scale development.

The high response rates of the present research effort confirm the suggestions of previous studies and demonstrate the interest of participants about the research topic (e.g., Layne & Thompson, 1981; Churchill & Iacobucci, 2005) as well as the



correctness of tourists' approach time at research fields, facts that overshadowed the relatively large-scale questionnaire of this study (eight pages).

Structured written questionnaires reduce researchers' bias (Jahoda et al., 1962). The vast majority of questions in the questionnaire were closed (only one question about activities at loved destination was open-ended) in order to avoid random and systematic errors as well as for the ease of data processing (Zouni, 2008). Moreover, in order not to lose some respondents' answers, it was considered appropriate-when necessary- to add the option "other" in some questions, giving the opportunity to the respondents who had a different answer, from all the available ones, to specify it.

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### 5.2.2. MEASUREMENT SCALES

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According to Ritchie and Goeldner (1987), there are three main approaches for a measurement scale development. The first approach includes the selection of a measurement scale that has been developed and examined in previous studies. In the second approach, the measurement scale development is based on the modification of an existing scale or the addition of new elements in an existing scale. The third approach involves the development of a new measurement scale that is reliable and valid (Diamantopoulos, 2005; DeVellis, 2016). Due to the lack of systemic and holistic approaches in tourism studies (Zouni & Kouremenos, 2008), as well as the novelty of the destination love concept, the development of a research tool, which constitutes a new measurement scale (which also includes few items of previous related academic scales) was considered essential for this study.

The DL (destination love) multi-item measurement scales development for this study were based predominately on the primary findings of Studies 1 and 2, but also (in a lesser extend) on the extensive literature review in the tourism, marketing and psychology fields, previous empirical studies and results (e.g., Sternberg, 1988; Fournier, 1998; Ahuvia, 1993, 2005; Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006, Albert et al., 2008; Batra et al., 2012; Bagozzi, Batra & Ahuvia, 2016; Swanson, 2015, 2017; Christou, 2018; Aro et al., 2018), observations and experiences of the given phenomena at



destinations, so that the construct and content validity improves (Zouni & Kouremenos, 2008).

More specifically, for the development of the DL multi-item measurement scales, the procedure of Study 1 and Study 2 was followed as well as the stages, suggested by Churchill (1979) were adapted in this research. The first stage included the specification of the theoretical concepts. In particular, the first stage was related with the specification of all love items in the loved destination that constitute the tourist emotional experience as well as the relative dimensions of the DL measurement, as resulted from Study 1 and Study 2. For the selection of DL items (apart from the approaches followed in study 1 and study 2), also a broadly used approach in tourism research, suggested by Tribe and Snaith (1998) was adopted; initially, we reviewed the love literature and investigated the secondary available sources (e.g., Ahuvia 1993, 2005; Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006, Albert et al., 2008; Batra et al., 2012; Swanson, 2017; Christou, 2018; Aro et al., 2018). Moreover, the so called “critical literature” was examined, since the secondary sources can be useful in providing only a partial picture of concepts under study. Critical literature is defined as “*literature which has no particular interest to serve promotional efforts and is mainly comprised by newspapers reports, guide books and television reports*” (Tribe & Snaith, 1998: 29). In the second stage, love items were grouped based on their relevance (as described in the section of Study 1, Study 2, and Destination Love prototype) Afterwards, tourists’ focus group was participated in personal interviews to confirm/disconfirm the emerging and relevant DL items (see Bieger, 1998; Weiermair & Fuchs, 1999), and in the third stage the questionnaire was designed.

A 7-point Likert scale was used for all destination love items, alike brand love and most psychological concepts, which are measured using self-report scales that typically range from 1 to 7 Likert scale (e.g., Ahuvia et al, 2013; Rauschnabel & Ahuvia, 2014; Bagozzi, Batra & Ahuvia, 2016). Furthermore, 5 or 7-point likert scales are the most commonly used in tourism and marketing studies (Malhorta, 2006; Dawes, 2008). There are many methodological advantages in implementing 7-point Likert scales over 5-point Likert scales. First of all, 7-point Likert scales capture a wider variety of information on a specific research topic and give more accurate





measures of respondents' true evaluations (Finstad, 2010). The more variability that Likert scales encompass, the more heterogeneous participants' responses are (Jiang, 2019). In addition, 7-point Likert scales give the possibility for participants to choose more variations (for example, 2, 3, 5, 6) around the extreme points (e.g., 1, 7) and the midpoint (4). Thus, respondents have more options to choose in order to express their true thoughts (Jiang, 2019). In addition, using larger scales than the 5-point scale helps to minimise the problem of leniency, central tendency and the *"halo effect"* associated with such scales (Walker, 1994). The midpoint (4) is essential as it lies at *"the heart of the relationship between awareness, effort and validity in Likert response"* (Johns, 2005: 240). Researchers should make Likert scales midpoints available for survey participants when the survey is on fuzzy or complex topics, where many participants will have no basis for choice (Johns, 2005). Moreover, Miller (1956) suggested that 7 point Likert scales are the best for individuals to memorize. Miller (1956: 91) stressed that *"there is a finite span of immediate memory and that for a lot of different kinds of test materials this span is about seven items in length"*. Additionally, 7-point Likert scales generate optimized reliability and validity (Preston & Colman, 2000). Validity rises with growing numbers of scale points or response categories (e.g., Hancock & Klockars, 1991; Chang, 1994; Jiang, 2019). The implementation of 7 point Likert scales can maximize the reliability of scores (e.g., Miller, 1956; Nunnally, 1967; Finn, 1972; Ramsay, 1973). Moreover, the highest internal consistency is achieved with seven or more points scales (Preston & Colman, 2000). Based on these merits of 7-point Likert scales over 5-point Likert scales, this study uses 7-point scales.

Furthermore, although some tourism studies adopt both 5-point and 7-point Likert scales (e.g., Baloglu & Mangalolu, 2001), the inconsistency of response categories may cause respondent confusion (Principles of Questionnaire Construction, 1998). Moreover, for the selection of the relevant destination services for Satisfaction multi-item scale, the present study draws from Buhalis (2000) typology or 6As of tourism destinations (Attractions, Accessibility, Amenities, Available packages, Activities, Ancillary services) as well as from Neal & Gursoy (2008). The presence of the Satisfaction multi-item scale in this study is essential since in marketing literature, the measurement of consumer attitude towards a brand is based on numerous metrics



including satisfaction (Higgins, 1997), as well as brand loyalty (Oliver, 1999 ). The WOM scale of this study is based on Carroll and Ahuvia (2006).

This research effort, based on Ahuvia (1992), also used 11-likert point scales (both in study 2 and in study 3), mainly about questions concerning how much respondents love their most favorite/preferable/ideal destination (study 3) as well as about emotional intensity, complexity, vagueness and objectivity of love, passion, emotional attachment and like concepts and differentiation among destination, brand and interpersonal love (study 2). This was done due to the complexity of love emotion in order to provide more sufficient options to accurately pinpoint participants' true feelings/ attitudes. Moreover, a larger scale, e.g. 11-point Likert scale, can offer more variance than a smaller Likert scale e.g. 7-point or 5-point Likert scales and a higher degree of measurement precision. Furthermore, it can provide a better opportunity to detect changes and more power to explain a point of view (Wittink & Bayer, 2003). However, it should be stressed that larger scales take longer time for respondents to decide/ fill up the questionnaire, especially when the question items are many, something that may in turn discourage the respondents to complete the survey. This is the reason why 11-point Likert scales were used only for very few, complex questions in this research study. Moreover, since *“respondents tend to choose verbal labels over numerical labels when both are used on a scale”* (Haley & Case, 1979: 31), this study used only verbal labels on 7-point Likert scales. In addition, empirical results have shown that respondents tend to the extremes of a numerical scale, whereas a verbal scale is less subject to this response bias towards the extremes of the scale (Shulman, 1973; Schwarz, Knauper, Hippler, Noelle-Neumann & Clark, 1991).

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### 5.2.3. SECTIONS OF THE STUDY'S QUESTIONNAIRE

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A questionnaire can be used in order to gather information about a) tourists' characteristics, b) tourists' activities and c) tourists' behaviors and motivations (Veal, 1992). Moreover, the kind of information that can be stemmed from a questionnaire is the following (Oppenheim, 1966; Krosnick, 1991):

- **Personal attributes:** include demographic, socio-economic and other personal characteristics



- **Cognitive attributes:** include information about the things that respondents are aware of as well as respondents' beliefs
- **Affective attributes:** refer mainly to information about respondents' attitudes and evaluations
- **Behavioral attributes:** refer to information about respondents' behavior (past, present, future intentions)

For the purposes of this study, the questionnaire was designed in a way that includes all the four aforementioned attribute categories. The questionnaire includes nine sections. The presence of separate sections in a questionnaire is advantageous for respondents, since it makes them clear what is being investigated (Converse & Presser, 1986).

The first section of the structured questionnaire was designed to identify and measure tourists' general travel patterns (WTO, 1999). The questions of the first section were simple and objective in order to enhance participants' positive response (Ryan, 1995; Kouremenos, 1996; Stathakopoulos, 1997). These questions addressed topics such as tourists' travel patterns (e.g., usually travel alone, with family, with friends, as a couple, as a part of an organized group), most preferred travel packages, most important activities during holidays, most favorite/preferable holiday destination, how many favorite/preferable holiday destinations they have, whether having visited their most favorite/preferable destination or not, how many times they have visited this destination, most important factors that influenced tourists' decision to visit their most preferable/favorite holiday destination, how many nights they spend on average at this specific destination, the typical type of their accommodation, tourists' perceptions about the notions of love and like, and the most important characteristics that a place must have in order to be your most favorite / preferable.

The second section measured the influence of tourists' most favorite/preferable holiday destination/place has/had on them (self-love items), the third section measured the elements of tourists' behavior towards their most favorite/preferable holiday destination/place (passion-romantic driven behavior towards the most favorite/preferable destination as well as nostalgia items). The fourth section of the questionnaire measured tourists' opinion about the local people of their most



favorite/preferable holiday destination/place (anthropomorphism, emotional solidarity with locals), the fifth section of the study instrument was about the degree of matching between tourists and their most favorite/preferable holiday destination/place (self-destination integration items). The sixth section of the questionnaire measured tourists' emotions towards their most favorite/preferable holiday destination/place (positive emotional connection items), the seventh section measured tourists' attitude towards their most favorite/preferable holiday place/destination (long-term relationship, word of mouth items), the eighth section measured tourists' degree of satisfaction about their most favorite/preferable holiday destination/place as well as whether they love or not this destination and if yes how much. The last question of this section was about how much Greece identifies with their most favorite/preferable holiday destination/place (for tourists whose most preferable/favorite holiday destination was other than Greece). The final section was about tourists' demographic characteristics (nationality, age, gender, educational level, average monthly income), which are considered as more sensitive and personal informations and thus it is advisable to be placed at the end of the questionnaire (Oppenheim, 1968; Stathakopoulos, 1997).

## STATISTICAL METHODS & RESULTS OF STUDY 3

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### 5.3. PRELIMINARY ANALYSES

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#### 5.3.1. DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

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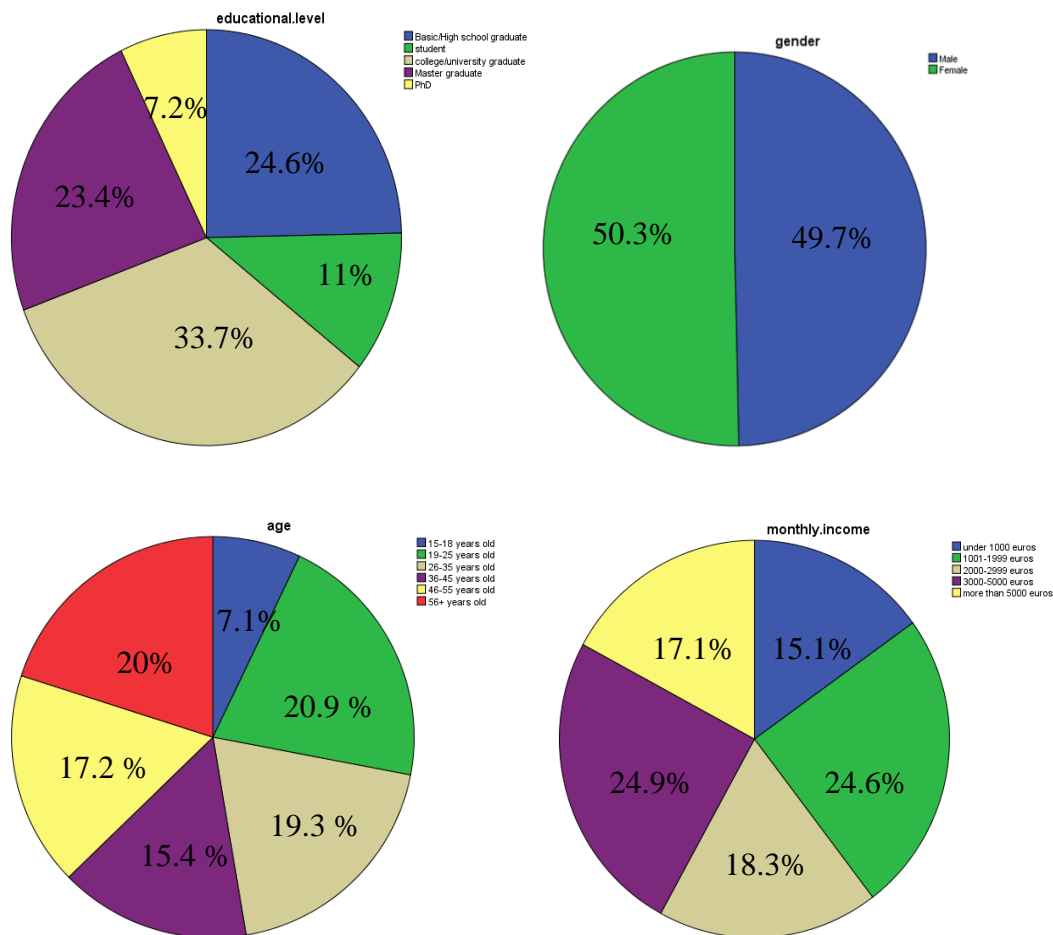
##### 5.3.1.1. DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS

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The sample consisted of 1008 participants, both international and national, and 50.3% of them were women. Participants come from 38 different countries across the world. Furthermore, the majority of the participants (13.6%) were from the USA, followed by British (12.1%), Italians (12%), Germans (11.5%),



French (10.4%), Spanish (7.5%), Australians (5.4%), Dutch (5.1%), Austrians (2.6%), Greeks (2.5%), Irish (2.3%) and Canadians (2.2%). The rest of the participants came from other countries (e.g., Argentina, Brazil, China, South Africa, Belgium, Hungary, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Puerto Rico, Colombia, New Zealand, Russia, Slovakia, Israel, Portugal, Poland, Finland, India, Mexico, Uruguay, Malta, Switzerland, Seychelles, Czech Republic).



33.7% of the respondents were university/college graduates, 24.6% of high school/basic education, 23.4% master graduates, 11% students, and 7.2% PhD graduates. Most of the participants were between 19 and 25 years old (20.9%) and 56 or more years old (20%). In addition, 19.3% of them were between 26 and 35 years old, 17.2% between 46 and 55 years old, 15.4% between 36 and 45 years old and 7.1% between 15 and 18 years old. The majority of the participants (24.9%) had average monthly income between 3.000 and 5.000



euros, followed by those between 1001 and 1999 euros (24.6%), 18.3% had average monthly income between 2000 and 2999 euros, 17.1% more than 5000 euros and 15.1% less than 1000 euros. All respondents agreed to participate voluntarily and received no money for taking part in the research.

### 5.3.1.2. PARTICIPANTS' TRAVEL BEHAVIORAL & ATTITUDINAL PATTERNS

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The majority of the participants claimed that they usually travel as a couple (33.8%) and with family/family with children (30.1%), followed by those who travel with a group of friends (22%), alone (7.7%) and as a part of an organized group (6.4%). Furthermore, 31.3% of the respondents usually prefer all inclusive travel packages (transportation, food and lodging are all provided at an inclusive price) and 68.7% self administered vacations (buy each tourism service separately). The majority named as their most important activity (open question) during holidays “*visiting historical sights/attractions*” (29%) and “*relaxation*” (28.7%). 91.6% of the participants claimed that they do have at least one favorite/preferable holiday destination. The participants were asked to choose the two most important characteristics that a destination/place must have in order to be their most favorite/preferable. The most important place characteristics (ranked with 1) found to be “unique sights/attractions/art/history of the place” (17%), “friendly and hospitable locals” (16.7%), “variety of activities/things to do at the place” (10.9%), “unique scenery/landscape” (8.2%), “unique experiences provided by the destination” (6.3%), “respect for the environment” (5.9%), “safety/security” (5.4%), “high quality standards of tourism services and products” (5%), “unique cuisine” (4.8%), “climate” (3.4%), “unique local lifestyle/customs” (3.3%), “high level of tourism providers’ professionalism” (3%), “nightlife/entertainment/events” (2.3%), “value for money” (2.1%), “simplicity/serenity of the place” (2.1%), “familiarity with home/customs” (1.7%), “luxury” (0.7%), “childhood memories” (0.7%), “easy access” (0.5%) and “other” (0.2%). The second most important characteristics (ranked with 2) almost identified with the first, and more specifically 11.2% of participants chose “friendly and hospitable locals”, 10.2% “unique sights/attractions/art/history of place”, 9.4%



“unique experiences at place”, 7.4% “unique scenery/landscape of the place”, “variety of activities/things to do” (7.1%), “unique local lifestyle/customs” (6.5%), “unique cuisine” (6.1%), “climate” (6.1%), “safety/security” (5.7%), “high level of tourism providers’ professionalism” (4.7%), “simplicity/serenity” (4.2%), “value for money place” (4.1%), “high quality standards of tourism services and products” (3.9%), “respect for the environment” (3.7%), “familiarity with home/customs” (2.8%), “nightlife/entertainment/events” (2.7%), “easy access” (1.5%), “luxury” (1.5%) and “childhood memories” (1.1%). The participants who claimed that they do have at least one favorite/preferable holiday destination/place, indicated that they have 4 or more favorite holiday destinations (32.5%), only one favorite holiday destination (27.2%), two favorite holiday destinations (24.6%) and three favorite holiday destinations (15.7%). 38.5% claimed that Greece is their most favorite holiday destination and 61.5% a place other than Greece. The striking majority (98.4% valid percent) claimed that they have visited their most favorite/preferable holiday destination. 31.8% (valid percent) of respondents have visited their most favorite/preferable destination one time, five or more times (30%), two times (15%), three times (13.3%) and four times (9.8%). Most of the participants spend on average 5-7 nights (31%) at their most favorite/preferable holiday destination, followed by those who spend 3-4 nights (18.2%), 8-10 nights (17%), 11-14 nights (13%), 15 or more nights (11.5%), 2 nights (6.2%), 1 night (1.9%) and those who do not stay overnight (1.3%). Their most typical type of holiday accommodation is hotel (47.1%), followed by rental rooms (21%), camping (10.2%), airbnb (8.2%), at relatives/friends (5.9%), own house (5.5%) and other, such as hostels, cruise ships and backpacking (2.1%). Moreover, participants claimed that the most important factor that influenced their decision to visit their most favorite/preferable holiday destination was positive word-of-mouth communication (32.1%), social media/tripadvisor etc (25.1%) and official web sites of the destination/other web sites (16.4%), articles in tourism and travel magazines (7.5%), brochures and leaflets of travel agents (7.2%) other, such as books, conferences, studies, job, cruises, festivals (5.1%), advertisements on TV, radio, newspapers, magazines etc (4.8%) and Information Kiosks of the destination’s National Tourism Organization (1.9%). The second most important factor that influenced their decision to visit their most favorite/preferable holiday destination was official web sites of the destination/other websites (25.5%), followed by social media





(22.1%), positive word of mouth communication (21.2%), articles in tourism and travel magazines (8.9%), advertisements on TV, radio, newspapers, magazines etc (8.2%), brochures and leaflets of travel agents (6.3%), other (4.4%) and Information Kiosks of the destination's National Tourism Organization (3.5%).

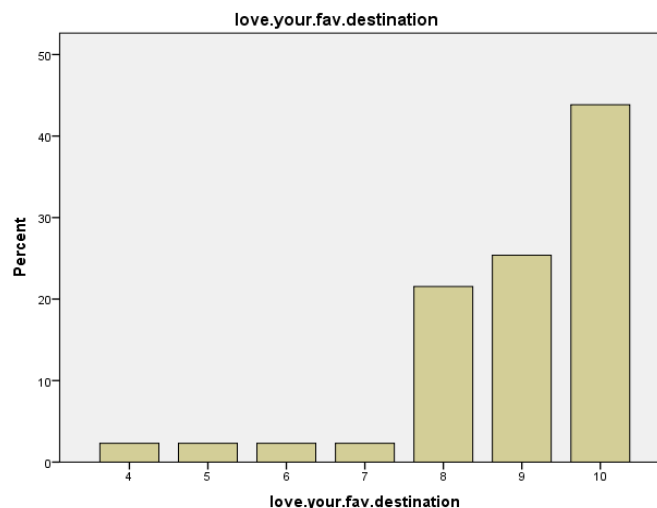
Participants' most important activity during their holidays at most favorite/preferable place (closed question) is relaxation (26.6%), visiting historical sights/attractions (22.6%), get in touch with local people and their culture (18.7%), touring (11.7%), explore new places (8%), sports/adventure seeking (6%), entertainment (5.3%) and other, such as shopping, events (1%). Participants' second most important activity is relaxation (22%), explore new places (19.2%), get in touch with local people and culture (17.8%), visiting historical sights/attractions (15.6%), sports/adventure seeking (7.4%), entertainment (6%) and other (0.5%).

- ❖ **Participants' perceptions of love versus like:** analogous to the results of study 2, most of the respondents (32.7%) consider that like and love are different concepts but with some shared characteristics/features and 30.6% perceive them as distinct concepts, 20.1% perceive like as part of love, 14.2% consider love as part of like and only 2.4% love and like as the same concept.
- ❖ **Participants' love towards their most favorite/preferable holiday destination:** The results about participants' perceptions of love and like show that most respondents actually can differentiate the two concepts and this is a very crucial factor in the last question of how much they do love their most favorite/preferable holiday destination (11 likert scale; from 0 not at all to 10 absolutely) (e.g., Ahuvia, 1992), since it gives confidence that they indeed evaluate their love emotion/relationship/feeling towards most favorite destination and not merely like. The striking majority of the respondents claimed that they do love their most favorite/preferable holiday destination (83.6%/valid percent). However, 85/1008 participants claimed that they do not have at least one favorite/preferable holiday destination and thus do not love any. So, in actual percentage (excluding those who did not answer about destination love and these 85 individuals who do not have a favorite destination), 74.8% claimed that they actually love their most favorite/preferable holiday destination. All the percentages from now on are the valid ones. More specifically, 34.3% of the respondents answered that they

absolutely love their most favorite destination (10/10), 22% of participants indicated 9/10, 18.4% of them indicated 8/10, 6% of them indicated 7/10 and 2.9% indicated 6/10. In addition, 8.8% of the participants claimed that they do not love their most favorite/preferable holiday destination (4.3% indicated 4/10, 1.8% indicated 3/10, 1.2% indicated 2/10, 0.9% indicated 1/10 and 0.6% indicated 1/10. The rest 7.7% chose the neutral option (5/10). The great majority of the participants also identified/perceived as similar their most favorite/preferable holiday destination with Greece (82.4%).

### 5.3.1.3. NATIONALITY & DESTINATION LOVE

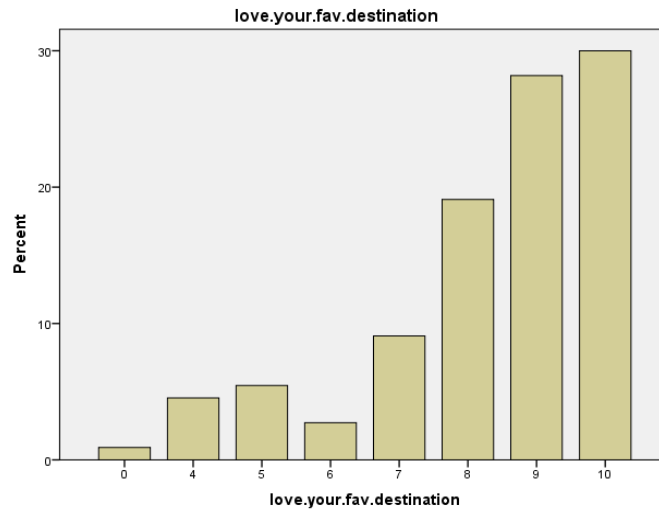
1. **Participants from USA:** the striking majority of people from the USA claimed that they absolutely love their most favorite/preferable holiday destination and more specifically 43.8% of them chose 10/10 (in a love continuum from 0-not at all to 10-absolutely), followed by 25.4% of them who chose 9/10, 21.5% who chose 8/10, 2.3% of them who chose 7/10 and 2.3% who chose 6/10. Only 2.3% chose 5/10 and 2.3% chose 4/10.



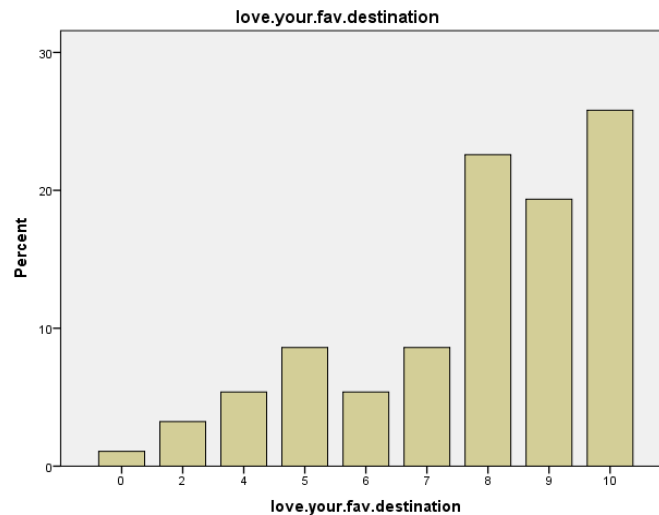
2. **Participants from the UK:** British follow the same pattern with people from the USA. 30% of British claimed that they absolutely love their most favorite/preferable holiday destination (10/10), followed by 28.2% who chose 9/10, 19.1% who chose 8/10, 9.1% who chose 7/10, 2.7% who chose 6/10,



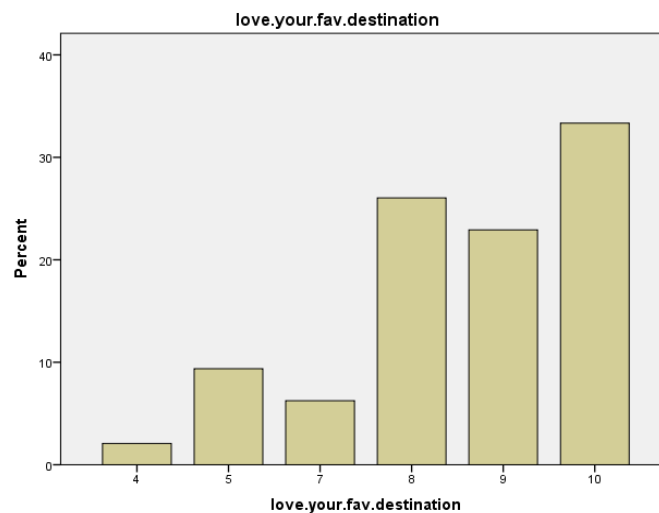
5.5% who remained neutral, 4.5% who chose 4/10 and only 0.9% who chose 0/10.



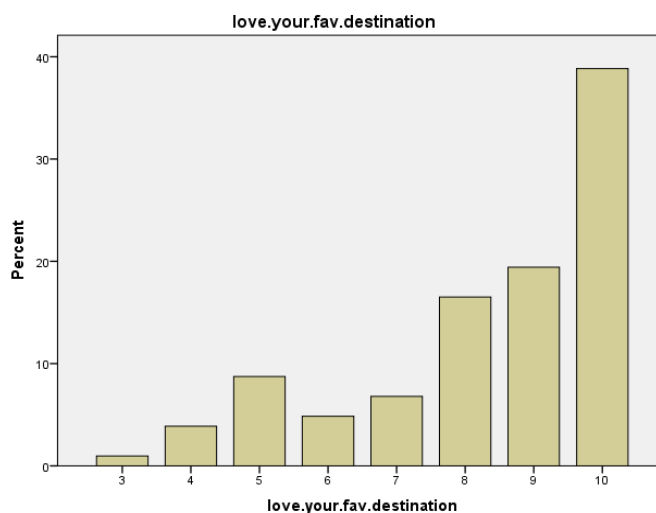
3. **Participants from Germany:** Germans also follow the same pattern with British and Americans. More specifically, 25.8% claimed that they absolutely love their most favorite/preferable holiday destination (10/10), followed by 22.6% who chose 8/10, 19.4% who chose 9/10, 8.6% who chose 7/10, 5.4% who chose 6/10, 8.6% who remained neutral, 5.4% who chose 4/10, 3.2% who chose 2/10 and only 1.1% who chose 0/10.



4. **Participants from France:** French follow the same pattern with British, Americans and Germans. More specifically, 33.3% claimed that they absolutely love their most favorite/preferable holiday destination (10/10), followed by 26% who chose 8/10, 22.9% who chose 9/10, 6.3% who chose 7/10, 9.4% who remained neutral, and 2.1% who chose 4/10.



5. **Participants from Italy:** Italians follow the same pattern with Americans, British, French and Germans as well.

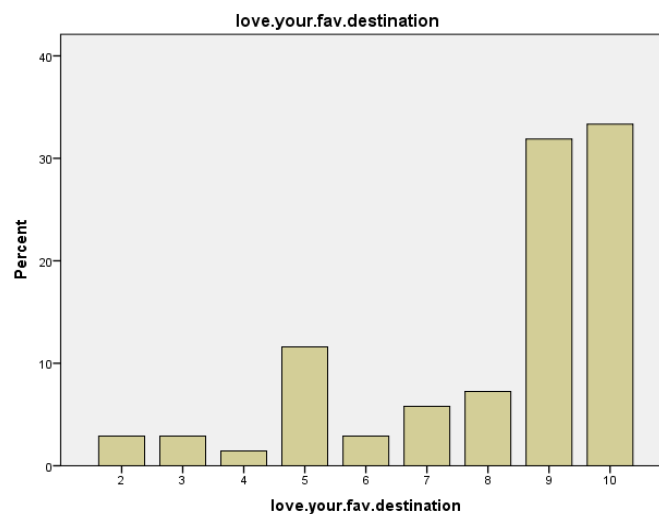


More specifically, 38.8% claimed that they absolutely love their most favorite/preferable holiday destination (10/10), followed by 19.4% who chose

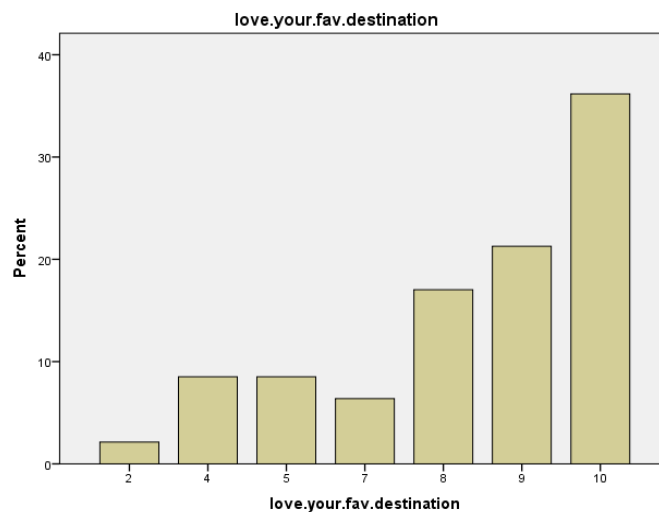


9/10, 16.5% who chose 8/10, 6.8% who chose 7/10, 4.9% who chose 6/10, 8.7% who remained neutral, 3.9% who chose 4/10 and 1% who chose 3/10.

6. **Participants from Spain:** Spanish also follow the same pattern with Italians, Germans, Americans, British and French. More specifically, 33.3% claimed that they absolutely love their most favorite/preferable holiday destination (10/10), followed by 31.9% who chose 9/10, 7.2% who chose 8/10, 5.8% who chose 7/10, 2.9% who chose 6/10, 11.6% who remained neutral, 1.4% who chose 4/10, 2.9% who chose 3/10 and 2.9% who chose 2/10.



7. **Participants from Australia:** Australians also follow the same pattern with Americans, British, French, Germans, Italians and Spanish.

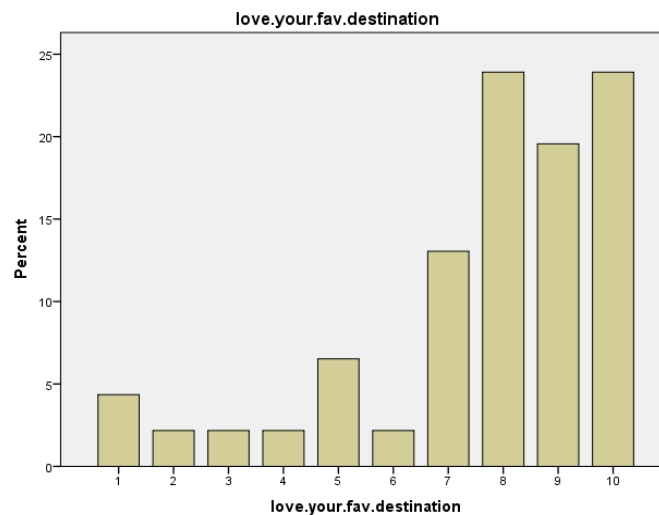


More specifically, 36.2% claimed that they absolutely love their most favorite/preferable holiday destination (10/10), followed by 21.3% who chose

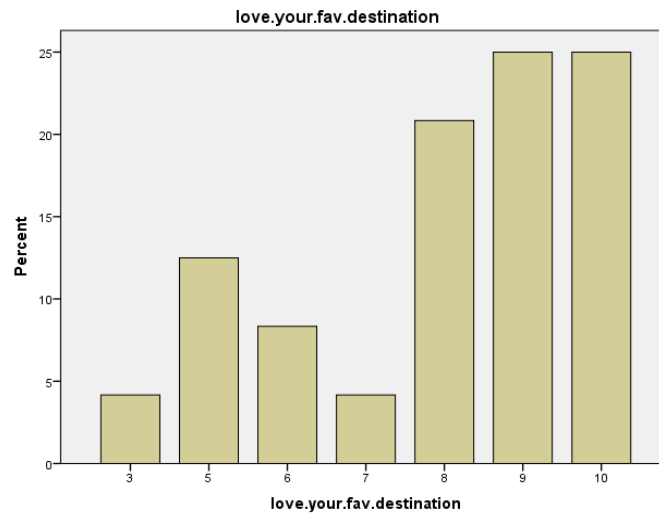


9/10, 17% who chose 8/10, 6.4% who chose 7/10, 8.5% who remained neutral, 8.5% who chose 4/10, and 2.1% who chose 2/10.

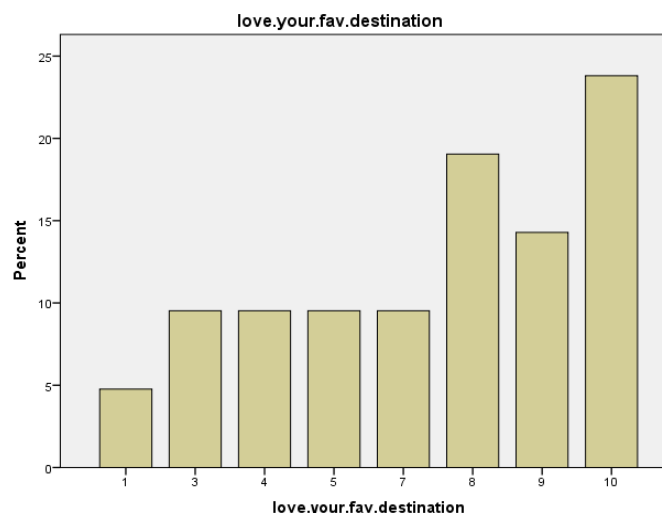
8. **Participants from the Netherlands:** Dutch follow the same pattern with Americans, British, French, Australians, Italians, Germans and Spanish. More specifically, 23.9% claimed that they absolutely love their most favorite/preferable holiday destination (10/10), and also 23.9% chose 8/10, followed by 19.6% who chose 9/10, 13% who chose 7/10, 2.2% who chose 6/10, 6.5% who remained neutral, 2.2% who chose 4/10, 2.2% who chose 3/10, 2.2% who chose 2/10 and 4.3% who chose 1.



9. **Participants from Greece:** Greeks follow the same pattern with Americans, British, French, Australians, Italians, Germans Dutch and Spanish. More specifically, 25% claimed that they absolutely love their most favorite/preferable holiday destination (10/10), and also 25% chose 9/10, followed by 20.8% who chose 8/10, 4.2% who chose 7/10, 8.3% who chose 6/10, 12.5% who remained neutral and 4.2% who chose 3/10.



10. **Participants from Austria:** Austrians follow the same pattern with Americans, British, French, Australians, Italians, Germans Dutch, Greeks and Spanish. More specifically, 23.8% claimed that they absolutely love their most favorite/preferable holiday destination (10/10), followed by 19% who chose 8/10, 14.3% who chose 9/10, 9.5% who chose 7/10, 9.5% who remained neutral, 9.5% who chose 4/10, 9.5% who chose 3/10 and 4.8% who chose 1/10.

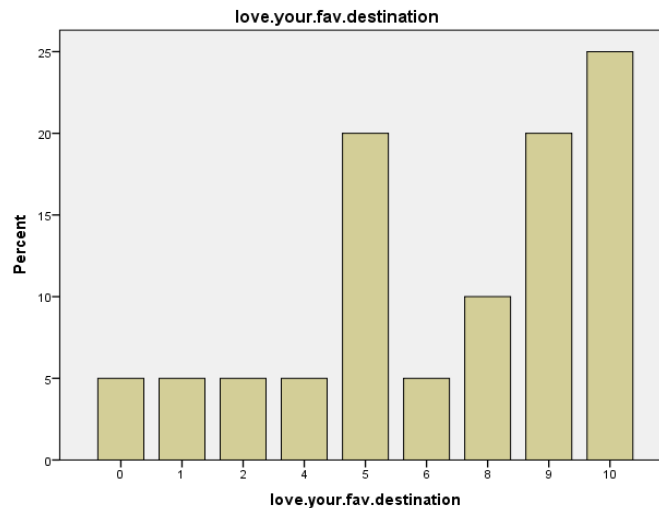


11. **Participants from Ireland:** Irish amost follow the same pattern with Americans, British, French, Australians, Italians, Germans, Austrians, Dutch, Greeks and Spanish. More specifically, 25% claimed that they absolutely love

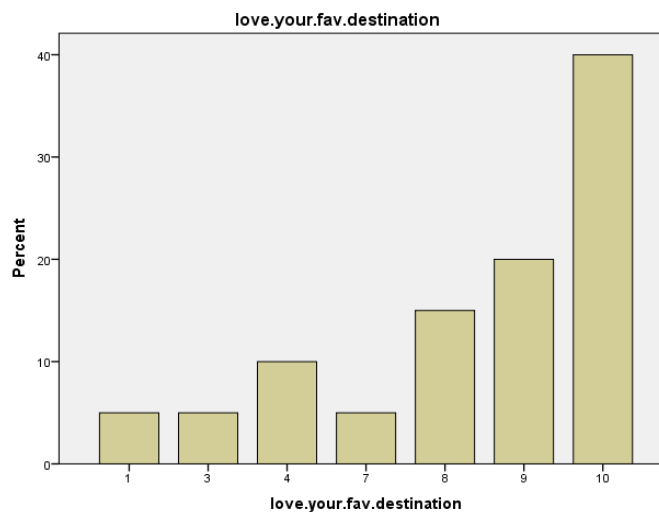




their most favorite/preferable holiday destination (10/10), followed by 20% who chose 9/10, 20% who remained neutral, 10% who chose 8/10, 5% who chose 6/10, 5% who chose 4/10, 5% who chose 2/10 and 5% who chose 1/10 and 5% who chose 0/10. The difference with Irish is that their percentage of “neutral” is substantially higher than all the other nationalities.



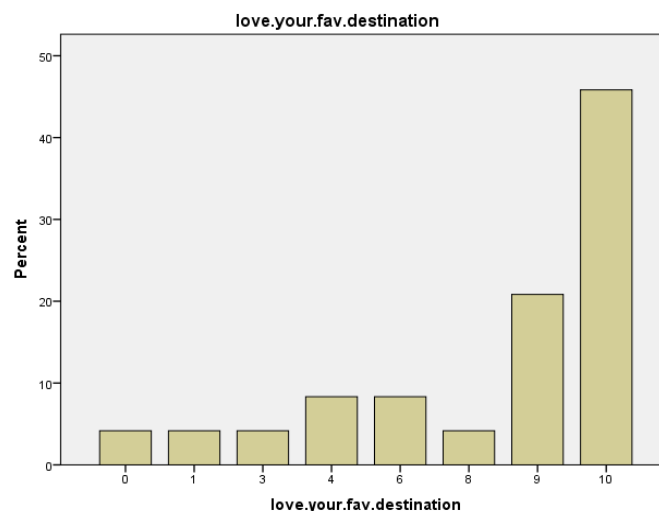
12. **Participants from Canada:** Canadians also follow the same pattern with Americans, British, French, Australians, Italians, Germans, Austrians, Dutch, Greeks, Irish and Spanish.



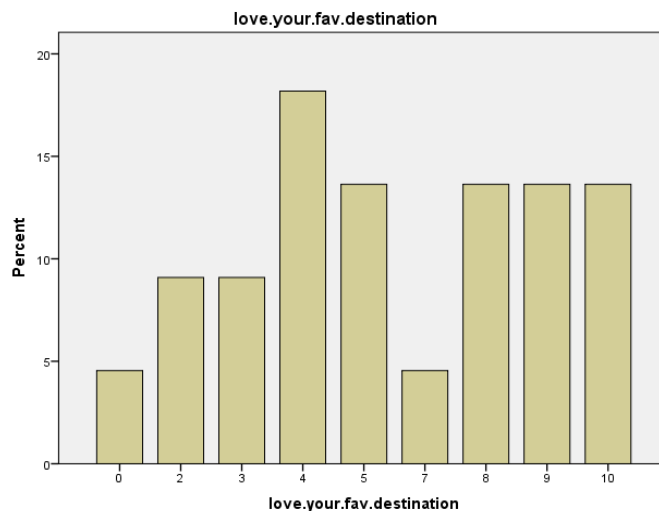


More specifically, 40% claimed that they absolutely love their most favorite/preferable holiday destination (10/10), followed by 20% who chose 9/10, 15% who chose 8/10, 10% who chose 4/10, 5% who chose 7/10, 5% who chose 3/10, and 5% who chose 1/10. The difference with Canadians is that their percentage of “4” is substantially higher than all the other nationalities and nobody chose “neutral”.

13. **Participants from latin America (Argentiniens, Brazilians, Colombians, Puerto Ricans, Uruguanian and Mexicans):** due to the very limited sample size of each of these countries, this study grouped all participants who come from these countries as latin Americans. Latin Americans follow the same pattern with Americans, British, French, Australians, Italians, Germans, Austrians, Dutch, Greeks, Canadians, Irish and Spanish. More specifically, 45.8% claimed that they absolutely love their most favorite/preferable holiday destination (10/10), followed by 20.8% who chose 9/10, 8.3% who chose 6/10, 8.3% who chose 4/10, 4.2% who chose 8/10, 4.2% who chose 3/10, 4.2% who chose 1/10 and 4.2% who chose 0/10. However, total sample size from latin America is 24/1008 and thus safe results can not be reached.



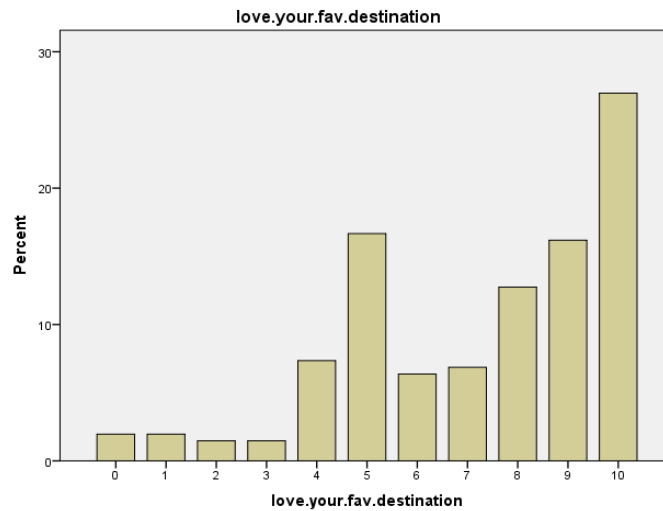
14. Participants from Scandinavia (Norwegians, Swedish, Finnish, Danish): Scandinavians (restricted sample size for each country) do not follow the same destination love pattern as all other nationalities so far. More specifically, the majority of Scandinavians (54.5%) do not love their most favorite holiday destination. The majority (18.2%) chose 4/10, followed by 13.6% who chose 5/10, 13.6% chose 8/10, 13.6% chose 9/10, 13.6% chose 10/10, 9.1% chose 3/10, 9.1% chose 2/10 and 4.5% chose 7/10. However, the total sample size from Scandinavia is only 26/1008 and thus safe results can not be reached.



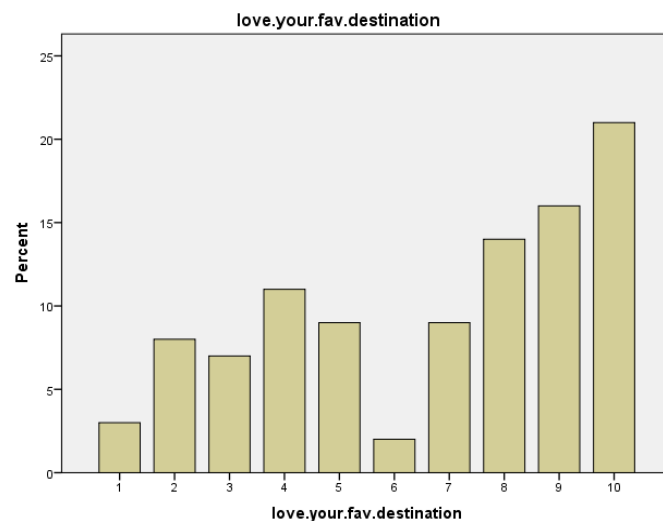
To sum up, destination love seems to be manifested and felt almost universally across different nationalities, apart from Scandinavians.

#### 5.3.1.4. EDUCATIONAL LEVEL & DESTINATION LOVE

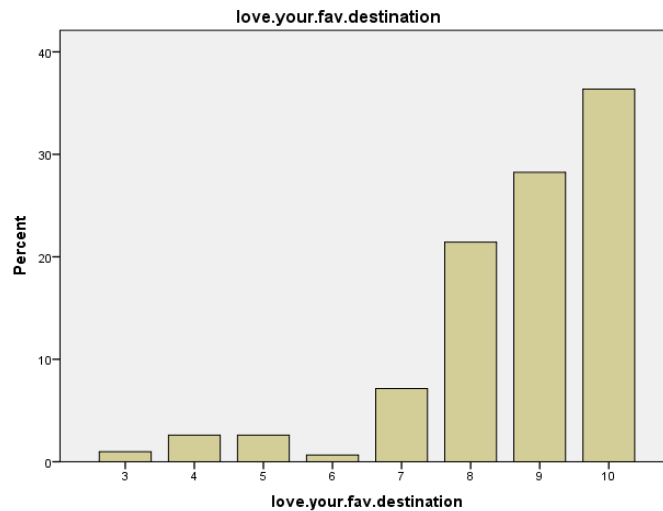
1. **Basic/high school level:** The majority of these participants (27%) claimed that they absolutely love their most favorite/preferable holiday destination (10/10), followed by 16.7% who stayed neutral, 16.1% who chose 9/10, 12.6% who chose 8/10, 7.4% who chose 4/10, 6.9% who chose 7/10, 6.4% who chose 6/10, 2% who chose 1/10, 2% who chose 0/10, 1.5% who chose 3/10 and 1.5% who chose 2/10. In total, 31.1% of participants with basic educational level do not love their most favorite/preferable holiday destination or stay neutral towards it.



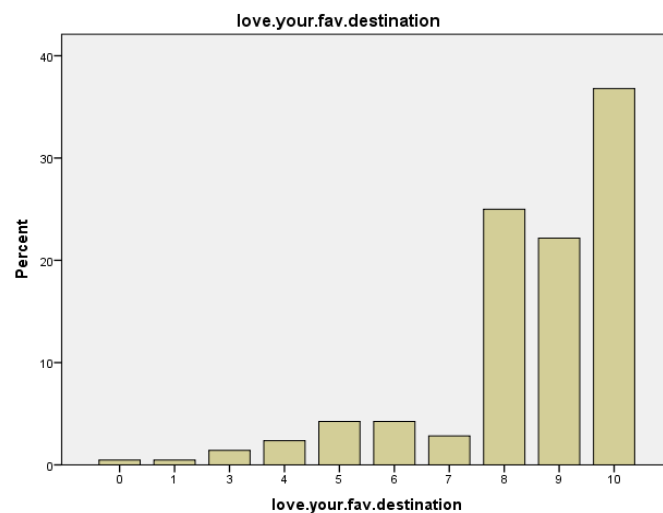
2. **Students:** 62% of students claimed that they do love their most favorite holiday destination and 38% do not love their most favorite/preferable holiday destination or stay neutral towards it. The majority (21%) claimed that they absolutely love it (10/10) and 16% chose 9/10, 14% chose 8/10, 11% chose 4/10 and 8% of them chose 2/10.



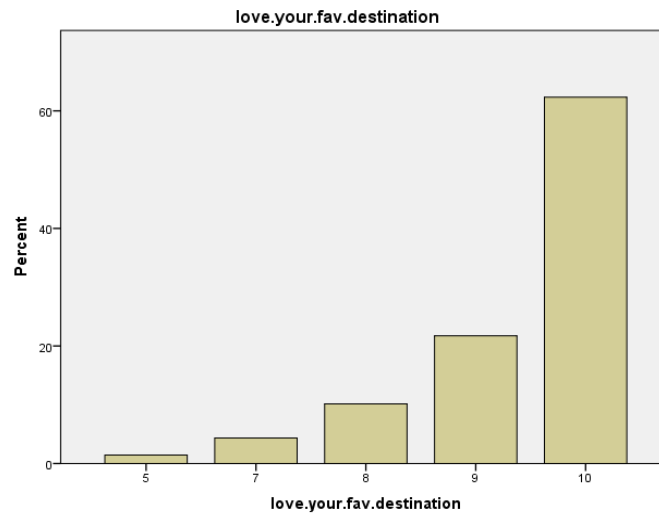
3. **University/college graduates:** The striking majority of university graduates (93.8%) claimed that they love their most favorite holiday destination and only 6.2% claimed the opposite or stayed neutral towards it. 36.4% of university graduates claimed that they absolutely love their most favorite holiday destination (10/10), followed by 28.2% who chose 9/10 and 21.4% who chose 8/10.



4. **Master graduates:** Following the same pattern as university graduates, most of the participants who are master graduates love their most favorite holiday destination (91%). Only 9% of them do not love it or stay neutral towards it. More specifically, 36.8% absolutely love it, 25% chose /10 and 22.2% chose 9/10.



5. **PhD graduates:** Almost all phd graduates (98.4%) claimed that they love their most favorite holiday destination. 62.3% claimed that they absolutely love it, 21.7% chose 9/10, 10.1% chose 8/10, 4.3% chose 7/10 and 1.4% chose 5/10.

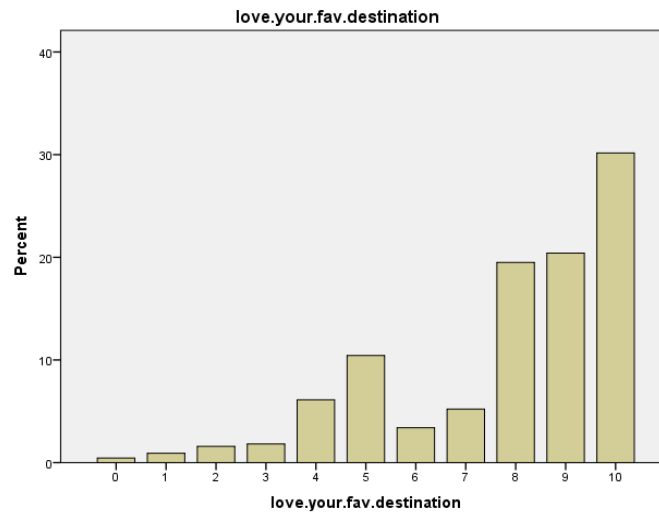


Even though the majority of individuals of all educational levels claimed that they do love their most favorite destination, some remarkable differences between individuals of basic education/students and those of high educational level (university/master and PhD graduates) can be noted. More specifically, the percentages of not loving a destination or being neutral towards it are remarkably higher for people of basic education (31.1%) and students (38%) compared to that of higher education (1.6% for PhD graduates, 9% for master graduates and 6.2% for university graduates, respectively).

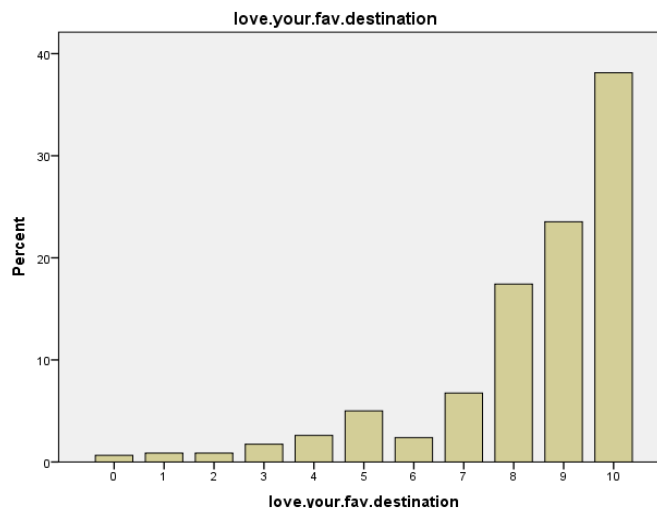
### 5.3.1.5.GENDER & DESTINATION LOVE

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1. **Males:** 78.7% of males claimed that they do love their most favorite/preferable holiday destination and 21.3% do not love it or stay neutral. 30.2% of males claimed that they absolutely love it, followed by those who chose 9/10 (20.4%) and 8/10 (19.5%). 10.4% of them stay neutral toward it as it concerns destination love emotion/relationship.



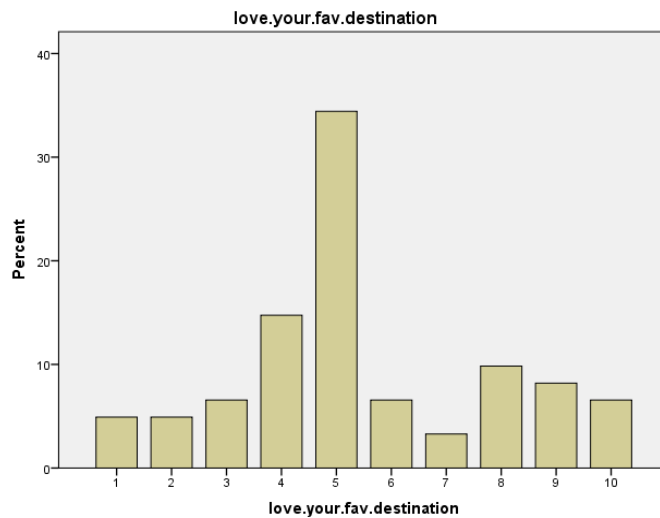
2. **Females:** 88.2% of females claimed that they love their most favorite/preferable holiday destination and 11.8% do not love it or stay neutral towards it. 38.1% of females absolutely love it (10/10), followed by 23.5% (9/10) and 17.4% (8/10).



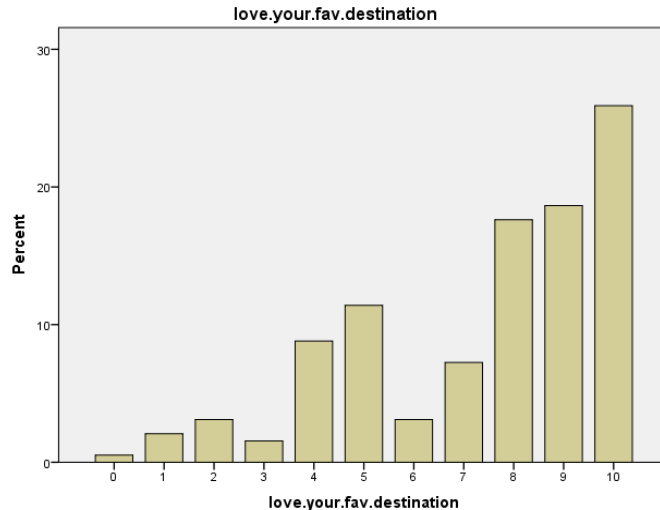
### 5.3.1.6. AGE & DESTINATION LOVE

1. **15-18 years old:** 65.6% of young people between 15 and 18 years old claimed that they do not love their most favorite/preferable holiday destination or stay neutral towards it. More specifically, 34.4% stay neutral towards it, 14.8% chose 4/10 and only 9.8% chose 8/10 and 6.6% chose 10/10.

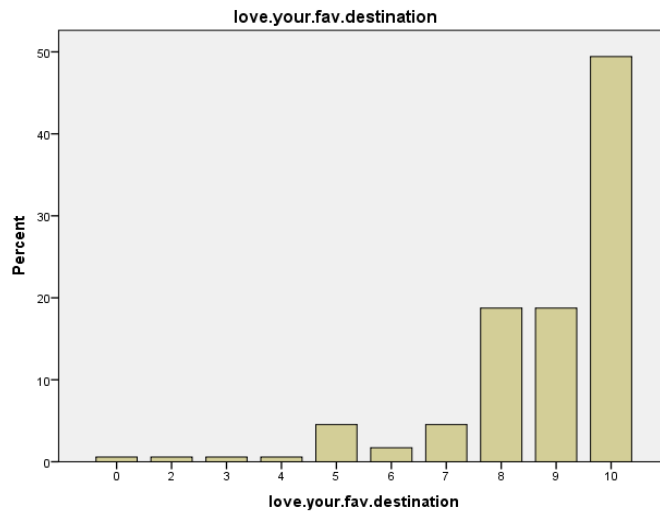




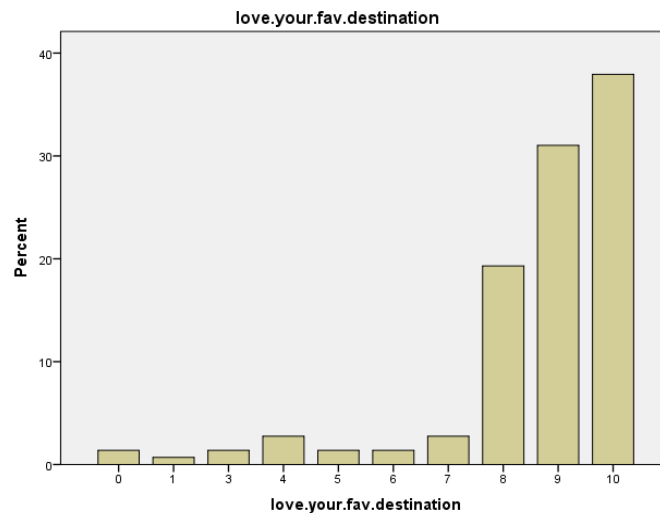
2. **19-25 years old:** 72.5% of participants between 19 and 25 years old claimed that they do love their most favorite/preferable holiday destination. 25.9% claimed that they absolutely love it, 18.7% chose 9/10, 17.6% chose 7/10, 11.4% stayed neutral and 8.8% chose 4/10.



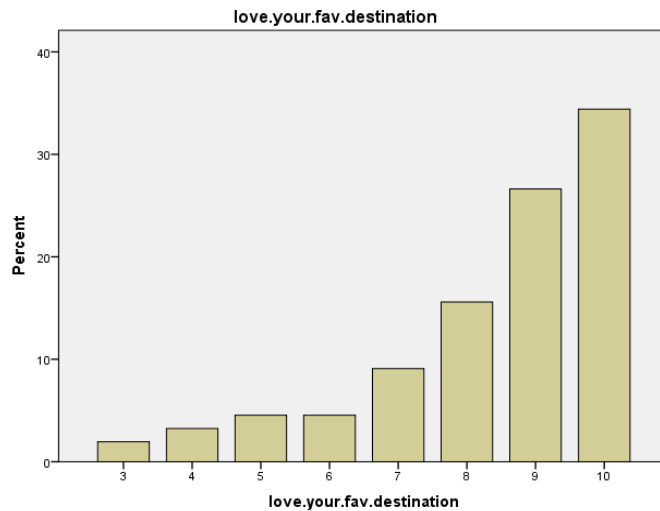
3. **26-35 years old:** 93.2% claimed that they love their most favorite/preferable holiday destination. 49.4% of the participants between 26 and 35 years old claimed to absolutely love it, 18.8% chose 9/10 and the same percentage chose 8/10. 4.5% of them remained neutral.



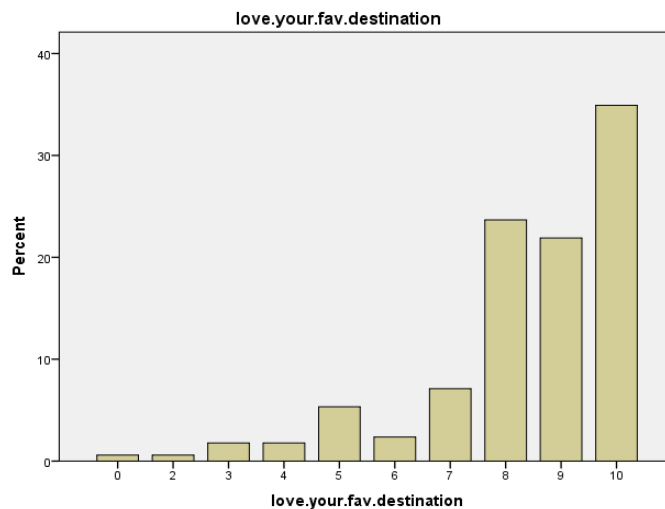
4. **36-45 years old:** 92.4% of the participants of this age category claimed that they love their most favorite holiday destination. 37.9% chose 10/10, 31% chose 9/10 and 19.3% chose 8/10. Only 2.8% chose 4/10 and 1.4% remained neutral.



5. **46-55 years old:** 90.3% of this age claimed to love their most favorite holiday destination. 34.4% chose 10/10, 26.6% chose 9/10 and 15.6% chose 8/10.



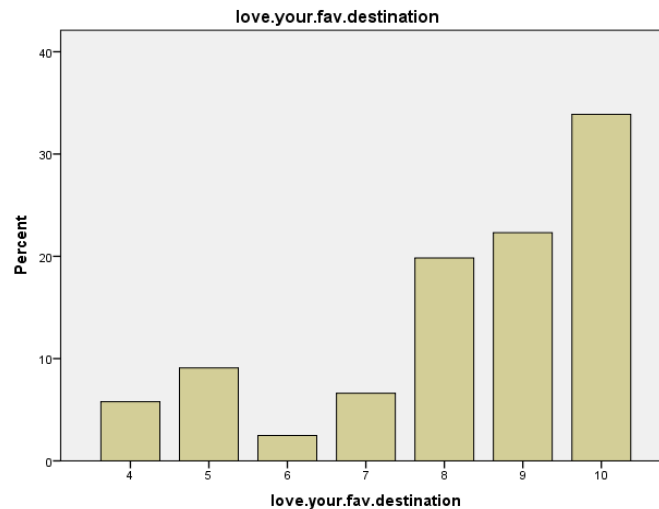
6. **56+ years old:** 89.9% of participants of this age claimed to love their most favorite holiday destination. 34.9% chose 10/10, 23.7% chose 8/10, 21.9% chose 9/10 and 5.3% remained neutral.



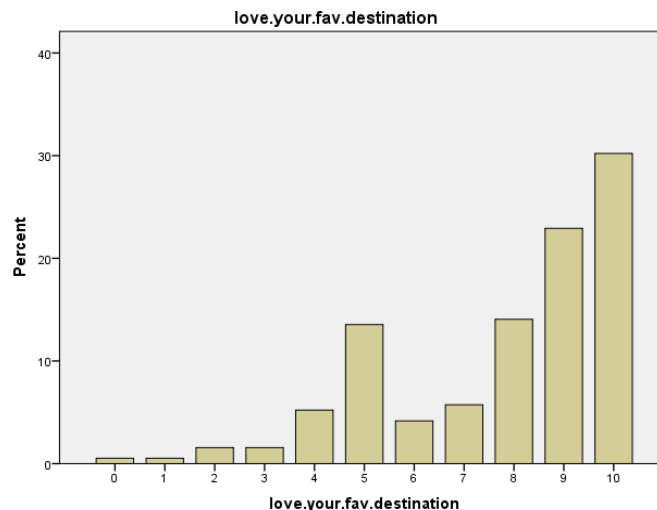
To sum up, destination love seems to be universal across all age groups apart from that of 15-18 years old. The striking majority of very young individuals does not seem to love their most favorite/preferable destination.

### 5.3.1.7. MONTHLY INCOME & DESTINATION LOVE

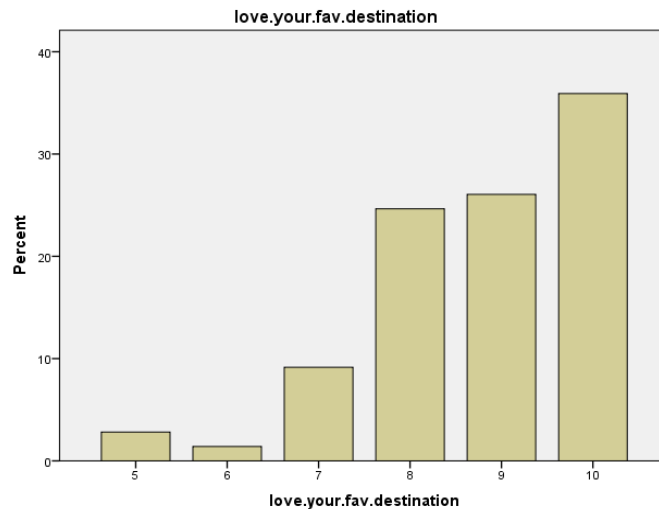
1. **Under 1000 euros:** 85.1% of participants of this category claimed that they love their most favorite/preferable holiday destination. 9.1% remained neutral and 5.8% chose 4/10. The majority (33.9%) claimed that they absolutely love it (10/10).



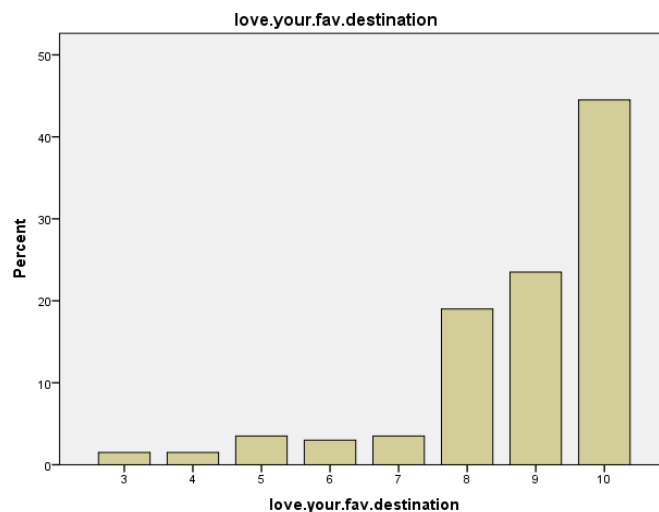
2. **1000-1999 euros:** 77.1% of this category claimed that they love their most favorite/preferable holiday destination. 30.2% claimed that they absolutely love it and 22.9% chose 9/10. 13.5% remained neutral.



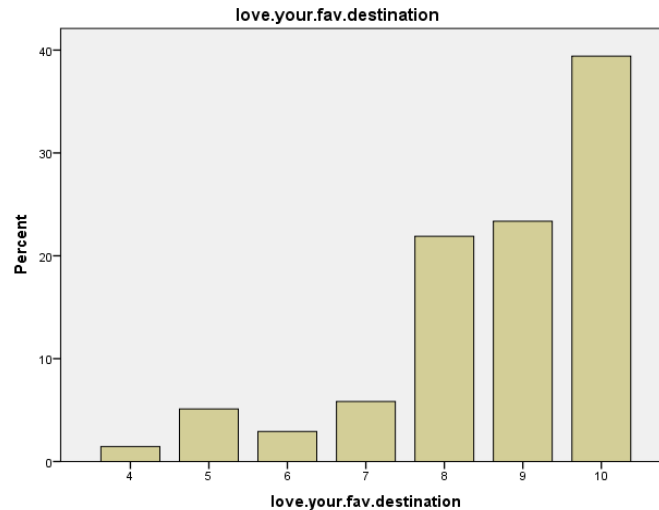
3. **2000-2999 euros:** the striking majority (97.2%) claimed that they love their most favorite/preferable holiday destination. 35.9% claimed that they absolutely love it (10/10) and 26.1% chose 9/10. Only 2.8% remained neutral in love emotions/relationships with their most favorite destination. None of them claimed that they do not love their most favorite destination.



4. **3000-5000 euros:** 93.5% love their most favorite/preferable holiday destination. 44.5% claimed that they absolutely love it (10/10) and 23.5% chose 9/10. Only 3.5% remained neutral and 3% do not love their their most favorite destination.



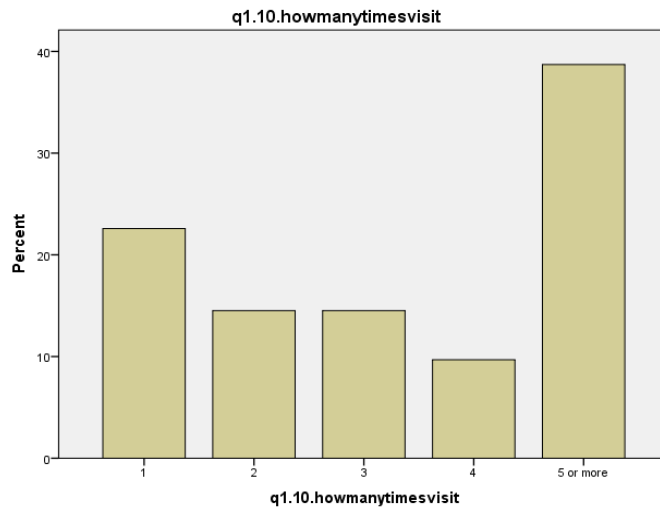
5. **More than 5000 euros:** 39.4% claimed to absolutely love their most favorite holiday destination, 23.4% chose 9/10 and 21.9% chose 8/10. Only 5.1% remained neutral and 1.5% chose 4/10.



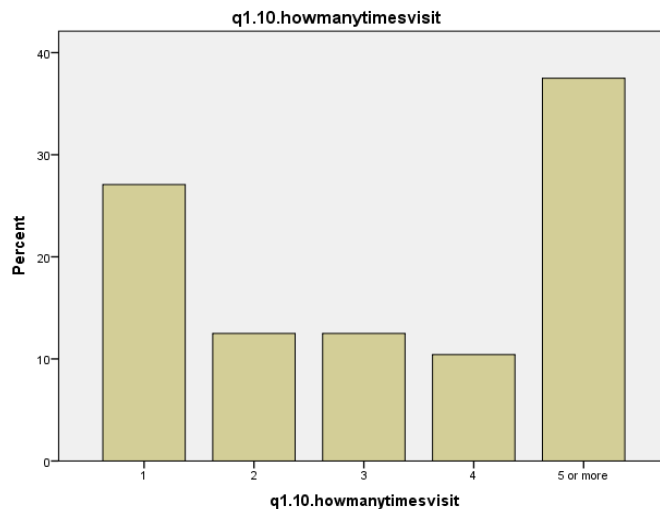
Destination love seems to be universal across all monthly income categories.

### 5.3.1.8. NATIONALITY, DESTINATION LOVE AND REPEAT VISITATION

1. **Participants from the USA:** 77.4% of the Americans who love their most favorite/preferable holiday destination (Destination Love equal or more than 6) claimed that they have visited it more than one time. More specifically, 38.7% have visited it five or more times, 9.7% four times, 14.5% three times and 14.5% two times. 22.6% claimed that they have visited their most favorite/preferable holiday destination only one time.

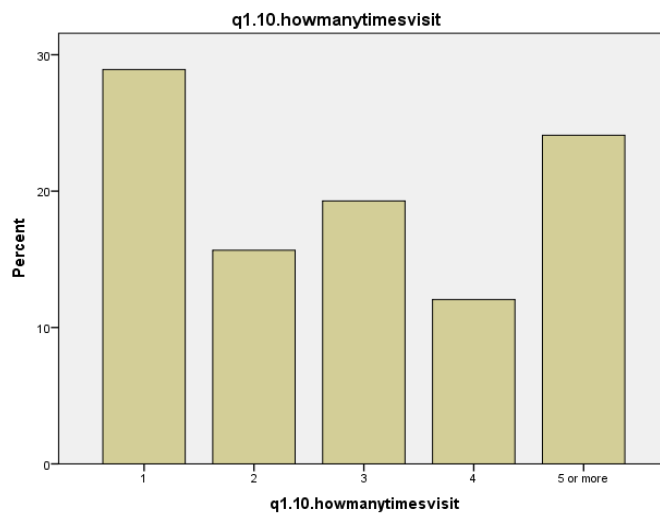


2. **British:** 72.9% of British have visited more than one time their most favorite/preferable holiday destination. More specifically, 37.5% of them have visited their most favorite/preferable holiday destination five or more times, 10.4% four times, 12.5% two times, 12.5% three times, and 27.1% only one time.

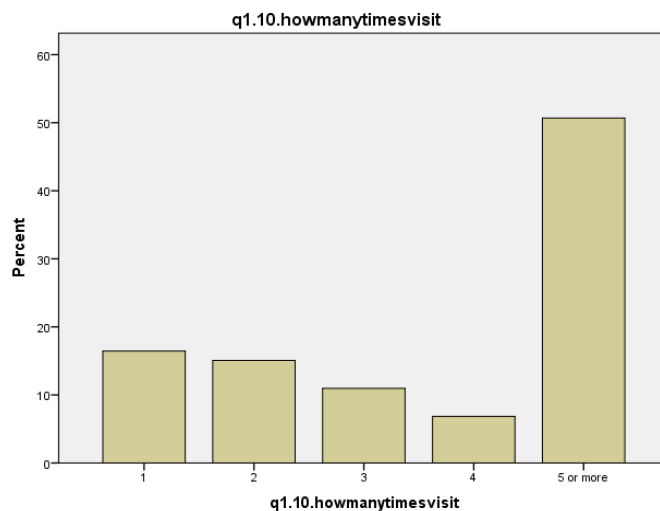


3. **Italians:** 71.1% of Italians who love their most favorite/preferable holiday destination are repeat visitors of it. More specifically, 24.1% have visited it five or more times, 12% three times, 19.3% two times, 15.7% four times and 28.9% one time.

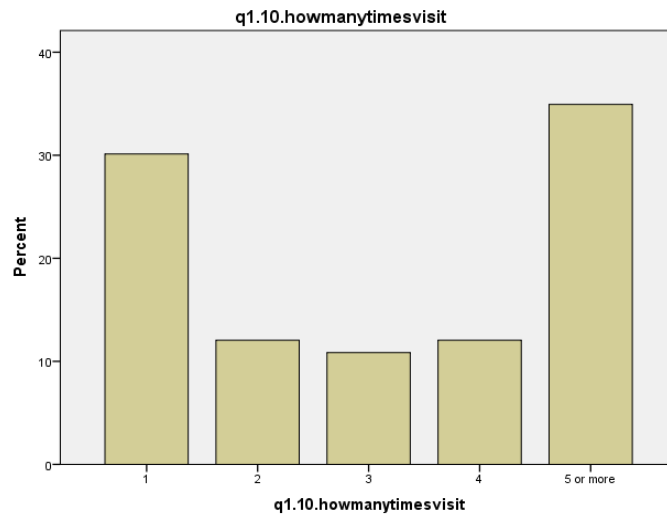




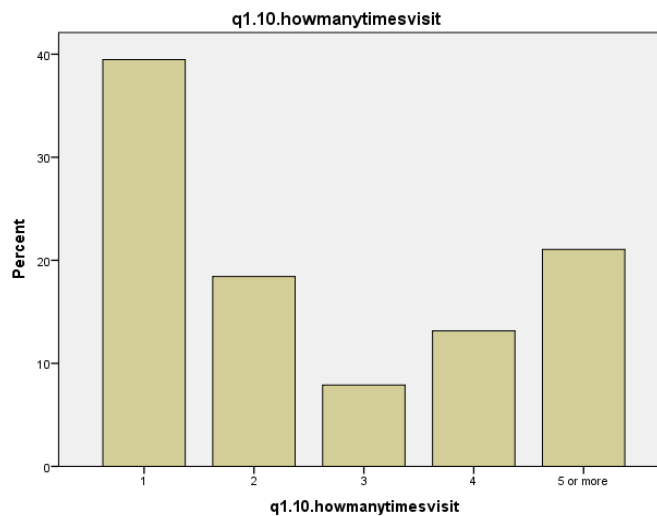
4. **Germans:** 83.6% of Germans, who love their most favorite/preferable holiday destination are repeat visitors of it and 50.7% have visited it more than five times, 15.1% two times, 11% three times, 6.8% four times and 16.4% one time.



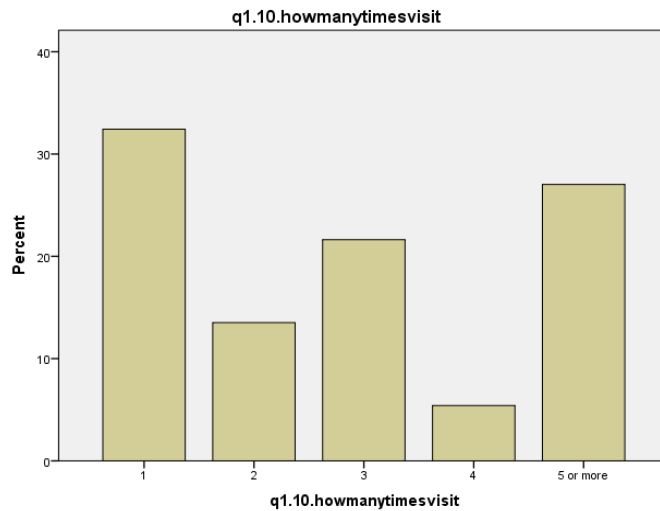
5. **French:** 69.9% of French who love their most favorite/preferable holiday destination have visited it more than one time. 34.9% have visited it five or more times, 12% four times, 12% two times, 10.8% three times and 30.1% one time.



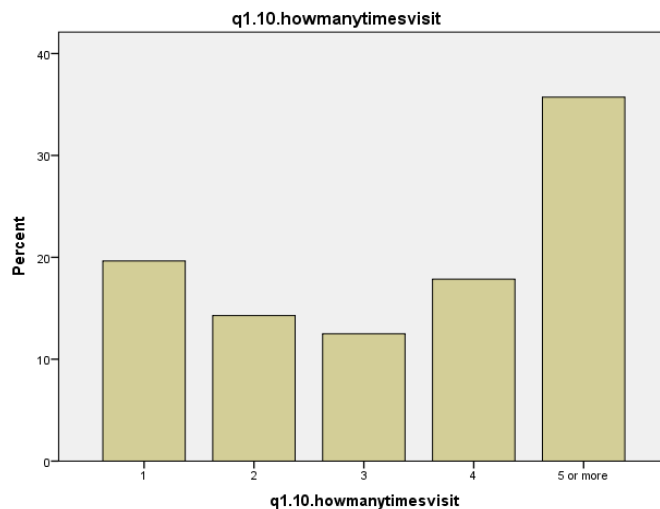
6. **Dutch:** 60.5% of Dutch who love their most favorite/preferable holiday destination have visited it more than once, 21.1% five or more times, 18.4% two times, 13.2% four times and 7.9% three times. 39.5% have visited it only once.



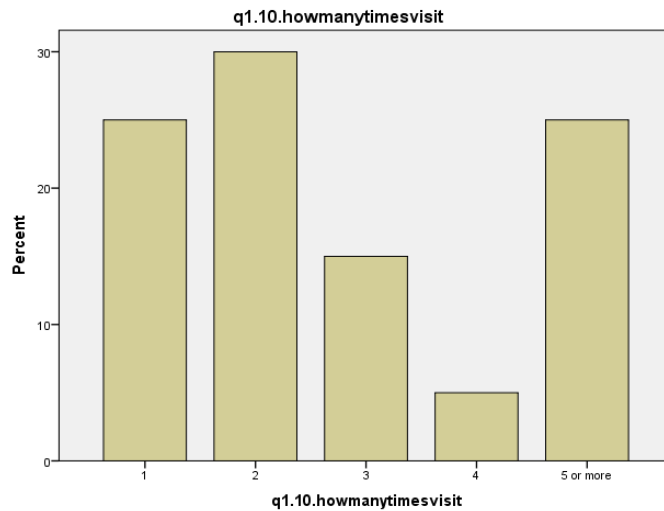
7. **Australians:** 67.6% of Australians who love their most favorite/preferable holiday destination are repeat visitors and 32.4% have visited their most favorite/preferable holiday destination only once. 27% have visited it five or more times, 21.6% three times, 13.5% two times, 5.4% four times and 32.4% one time.



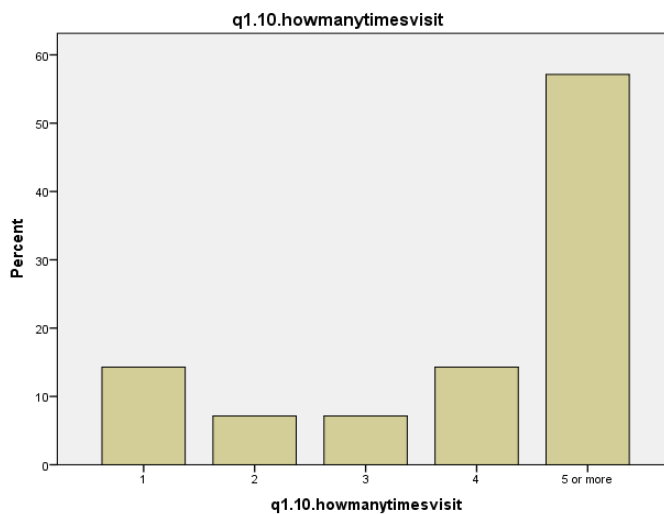
8. **Spanish:** 80.4% of Spanish who love their most favorite/preferable holiday destination are repeat visitors. 35.7% have visited it five or more times, 19.6% only one time, 17.9% four times, 14.3% two times and 12.5% three times.



9. **Greeks:** 75% of Greeks, who love their most favorite/preferable holiday destination are repeat visitors and 25% of them have visited it only one time. 30% have visited it two times, 25% have visited it five or more times, 15% three times and 5% four times.



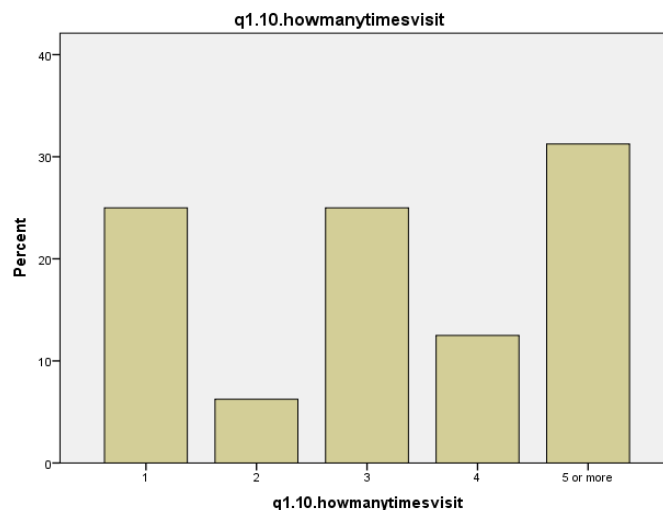
10. **Austrians:** 85.7% of Austrians, who love their most favorite/preferable holiday destination are repeat visitors. 57.1% have visited it five or more times, 14.3% four times, 7.1% two times, 7.1% three times and 14.3% one time.



11. **Irish:** 83.3% of Irish who love their most favorite/preferable holiday destination have visited it more than one time. 33.3% have visited it five or more times, 25% two times and 25% three times and 16,7% one time.



12. **Canadians:** 75% of Canadians who love their most favorite/preferable holiday destination have visited it more than one time. 31.3% have visited it five or more times, 25% three times, 12.5% four times, 25% one time and 6,3% two times.



13. **Scandinavians:** 45.5% of Scandinavians have visited their most favorite/preferable holiday destination only once. 27.3% five or more times, 18.2% three times, and 9.1% two times.



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### 5.3.2. RELIABILITY (CRONBACH'S ALPHA)

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An internal reliability test of multi-item types of destination love was performed and the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was estimated to assess the accuracy or precision of the measurement and to stabilize further the questionnaire items. Cronbach's alpha coefficient ranges in value from 0 (representing measurement consisting of only random error) to 1 (representing measurement without random error) and may be used to describe the reliability of factors extracted from dichotomous and/or multi-point formatted questionnaires or scales. The higher the score, the more reliable the generated scale is. Current conventions suggest that interitem consistencies of 0.80 (20% error) or higher represent good reliability (Cronbach, 1951). However, Nunnally (1978) and Robinson *et al.*, (1991) have indicated 0.70 to be an acceptable reliability coefficient. In this study, all scales have an alpha coefficient above 0.70, which is good considering that 0.70 is the cutoff value for being acceptable. Table 22 depicts the Cronbach's alpha coefficients of the theoretical study scales, which are of high level of reliability.



Table 22: Reliability Statistics

	Reliability Statistics	
Study scales	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
Self-love	0.944	13
Passionate/romantic driven behavior	0.851	6
Nostalgia & frequent thoughts	0.909	8
love stemming from locals	0.933	11
Self-identity	0.896	6
Self-expansion	0.911	4
Life meaning & intrinsic rewards	0.882	4
Positive emotions/psychological states	0.895	6
Emotional attachment	0.906	6
Intuitive fit	0.822	9
Long term relationship	0.924	6
Word of mouth	0.903	5

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### 5.3.3. COLLINEARITY AND MULTICOLLINEARITY STATISTICS

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Moreover, pairwise collinearity and multicollinearity were tested using the tolerance and variance inflation factor (VIF), respectively. Small tolerance values and large VIF values denote high collinearity (Hair, Anderson, Tatham & Black, 1995). VIF measure indicates the degree to which each destination love independent variable is explained by the other destination love independent variables. A common cutoff





threshold is a tolerance value below 0,10, which corresponds to VIF values above 10, denoting multicollinearity problem (Hair et al., 1995.) Thus, the VIF should not exceed a value of 10 (Hair et al., 1995). The results (of all variable/items combinations) showed no collinearity among the destination love dimensions, with the variance inflation factor (VIF) of all variables being far below the common cut-off threshold of 5 to 10 and tolerance value of all variables being above 0,10. Some indicative results are depicted below:

Table 23: Collinearity Statistics

<b>Coefficients</b>			
Models		Collinearity Statistics	
		Tolerance	VIF
<b>Self-love</b>	<b>1. Dependent Variable: inspiration</b>		
	Self-discovery	,383	2,608
	Best version of me	,358	2,792
	Self-appreciation	,381	2,623
	Self-definition	,368	2,718
	Sense stimulation	,507	1,973
	Self-confidence	,375	2,670
	Self-awareness	,357	2,804
	Understand the real values in life	,488	2,048
	Personal investment	,457	2,188
	Self-fulfillment	,382	2,618
	Self-balance	,341	2,936
	Self-actualization	,316	3,166
	<b>2. Dependent Variable: self-balance</b>		
	inspiration	,532	1,878
	Self-discovery	,344	2,909
	Best version of me	,356	2,806
	Self-appreciation	,381	2,623
	Self-definition	,368	2,718
	Sense stimulation	,469	2,131
	Self-confidence	,376	2,661
	Self-awareness	,356	2,810



	Real values in life	,487	2,055
	Personal investment	,462	2,163
	Self- fulfillment	,403	2,481
	Self-actualization	,532	1,878
	<b>3. Dependent Variable: self-discovery</b>		
	inspiration	,592	1,688
	Best version of me	,371	2,699
	Self-appreciation	,397	2,520
	Self-definition	,375	2,665
	Sense stimulation	,482	2,076
	Self-confidence	,380	2,632
	Self-awareness	,357	2,801
	Real values in life	,483	2,071
	Personal investment	,458	2,183
	Self-fulfilment	,380	2,630
	Self-balance	,340	2,944
	Self-actualization	,314	3,185
	<b>4. Dependent Variable: self-actualization</b>		
	inspiration	,531	1,882
	Best version of me	,356	2,807
	Self-appreciation	,383	2,613
	Self-definition	,369	2,713
	Sense stimulation	,471	2,122
	Self-confidence	,375	2,665
	Self-awareness	,368	2,714
	Real values in life	,486	2,059
	Personal investment	,469	2,132
	Self-fulfilment	,384	2,604
	Self-balance	,391	2,557
	Self-discovery	,342	2,925
	<b>5. Dependent variable: self-fulfillment</b>		
	inspiration	,534	1,873
	Self-discovery	,344	2,906
	Best version of me	,358	2,796



	Self-appreciation	,386	2,591
	Self-definition	,367	2,723
	Sense stimulation	,511	1,957
	Self-confidence	,376	2,660
	Self-awareness	,356	2,809
	Real values in life	,483	2,072
	Personal investment	,471	2,124
	Self-balance	,361	2,774
	Self-actualization	,319	3,133
	<b>6. Dependent Variable: Personal investment</b>		
	inspiration	,530	1,888
	Self-discovery	,344	2,911
	Best version of me	,357	2,801
	Self-appreciation	,381	2,623
	Self-definition	,367	2,725
	Sense stimulation	,471	2,122
	Self-confidence	,374	2,671
	Self-awareness	,356	2,810
	Real values in life	,497	2,012
	Self-balance	,343	2,918
	Self-fulfillment	,390	2,563
	Self-actualization	,323	3,095
	<b>7. Dependent Variable: self-confidence</b>		
	inspiration	,529	1,892
	Self-discovery	,347	2,882
	Best version of me	,363	2,757
	Self-appreciation	,385	2,595
	Self-definition	,367	2,726
	Sense stimulation	,477	2,097
	Self-awareness	,423	2,364
	Real values in life	,483	2,072
	Self-balance	,339	2,948
	Self-actualization	,315	3,178
	Self-fulfillment	,379	2,636
	Personal investment	,456	2,193



	<b>8. Dependent Variable: sense stimulation</b>		
	Inspiration	,571	1,751
	Self-discovery	,351	2,848
	Best version of me	,356	2,806
	Self-appreciation	,381	2,623
	Self-definition	,388	2,579
	Self-awareness	,358	2,791
	Real values in life	,483	2,071
	Self-balance	,338	2,957
	Self-actualization	,316	3,169
	Self-fulfillment	,412	2,429
	Personal investment	,458	2,183
	Self-confidence	,381	2,627
	<b>9. Dependent Variable: self-awareness</b>		
	Inspiration	,529	1,889
	Self-discovery	,343	2,915
	Best version of me	,357	2,800
	Self-appreciation	,385	2,600
	Self-definition	,368	2,718
	Real values in life	,506	1,975
	Self-balance	,338	2,959
	Self-actualization	,325	3,076
	Self-fulfillment	,378	2,646
	Personal investment	,456	2,193
	Self-confidence	,445	2,247
	Sense stimulation	,472	2,118
<b>Love stemming from locals</b>	<b>1. Dependent Variable: love locals</b>		
	affection	,402	2,486
	Feel welcomed	,369	2,709
	Mutual understanding	,367	2,726
	connection	,252	3,969
	affinity	,276	3,619
	Same values	,450	2,223
	kindness	,358	2,792
	hospitality	,356	2,808



	personal relationships	,563	1,777
	friendliness	,358	2,790
	<b>2. Dependent Variable: personal relationships</b>		
	affection	,399	2,505
	Feel welcomed	,369	2,709
	Mutual understanding	,367	2,724
	connection	,253	3,949
	affinity	,269	3,717
	Same values	,458	2,182
	kindness	,354	2,826
	hospitality	,358	2,791
	friendliness	,355	2,821
	Love locals	,413	2,424
	<b>3. Dependent variable: hospitality</b>		
	affection	,397	2,516
	Feel welcomed	,375	2,666
	Mutual understanding	,371	2,696
	connection	,252	3,968
	affinity	,273	3,659
	Same values	,449	2,225
	kindness	,395	2,529
	Personal relationships	,545	1,836
	Friendliness	,393	2,544
	Love locals	,397	2,519
	<b>4. Dependent Variable: same values</b>		
	Affection	,400	2,498
	Feel welcomed	,369	2,707
	Mutual understanding	,373	2,683
	Connection	,253	3,951
	Affinity	,297	3,371
	Kindness	,355	2,817
	Personal relationships	,550	1,819
	Friendliness	,353	2,836
	Love people	,396	2,528
	Hospitality	,355	2,820



	<b>5. Dependent Variable: affection</b>		
	Feel welcomed	,394	2,537
	Mutual understanding	,380	2,634
	Connection	,254	3,935
	Affinity	,285	3,507
	Kindness	,360	2,778
	Personal relationships	,541	1,849
	Friendliness	,351	2,848
	Love people	,400	2,503
	Hospitality	,354	2,823
	Same values	,452	2,212
<b>Nostalgia &amp; Frequent thoughts</b>	<b>1. Dependent Variable: nostalgic</b>		
	I miss this place often	,368	2,719
	I feel sad if not able to visit it	,343	2,913
	If I could never visit it again, I'd be miserable	,598	1,672
	I frequently think of this place	,297	3,367
	This place comes directly to mind when I want to go on vacations	,353	2,831
	I feel happy when I think of this place	,428	2,339
	I frequently find myself thinking about visiting this place	,295	3,389
	<b>2. Dependent Variable: miss the place often</b>		
	nostalgic	,550	1817
	I feel sad if not able to visit it	,432	2,315
	If I could never visit it again, I'd be miserable	,595	1,681
	I frequently think of this place	,295	3,390
	This place comes directly to mind when I want to go on vacations	,355	2,820
	I feel happy when I think of this place	,428	2,338
	I frequently find myself thinking about visiting this place	,550	1,817
	<b>3. Dependent variable: I frequently</b>		



	<b>think of this place</b>		
	nostalgic	,469	2,130
	Miss this place often	,311	3,210
	I feel sad if not able to visit it	,347	2,886
	If I could never visit it again, I'd be miserable	,593	1,687
	This place comes directly to mind when I want to go on vacations	,407	2,455
	I feel happy when I think of this place	,433	2,310
	I frequently find myself thinking about visiting this place	,331	3,021
<b>Desired self-identity</b>	<b>1.Dependent variable: this place presents me to others as I want to be</b>		
	This place makes me feel like I want to feel	,820	1,220
	This place makes me look like I want to look	,820	1,220
<b>Current self-identity</b>	<b>1.Dependent variable: This place reflects myself</b>		
	I feel that I belong to this place	,348	2,875
	Feel like I am home	,499	2,003
	It reminds me of home	,632	1,583
	It is an important part of myself	,403	2,482
<b>Self-expansion</b>	<b>1.Dependent variable: new perspectives in life</b>		
	Broadened my competences	,315	3,172
	Influence of way of thinking	,523	1,913
	Broadened interests	,341	2,929
<b>Life meaning &amp; intrinsic rewards</b>	<b>1.Dependent Variable: this place makes my life meaningful</b>		
	This place makes life worthliving	,600	1,668
	It is inherently important for me	,482	2,074
	Desire to live in this place	,477	2,098
	<b>2. Dependent Variable: this place makes life worthliving</b>		
	This place makes my life meaningful	,449	2,225



	It is inherently important for me	,411	2,432
	Desire to live in this place	,476	2,101
<b>Positive psychological states</b>	<b>1. Dependent Variable: feel happy</b>		
	Feel relaxed	,431	2,321
	Feel harmony	,348	2,876
	Feel amazed	,415	2,410
	Feel alive	,378	2,648
	Feel safe	,613	1,631
	<b>2. Dependent Variable: feel safe</b>		
	Feel happy	,293	3,417
	Feel relaxed	,309	3,232
	Feel harmony	,326	3,064
	Feel amazed	,397	2,518
	Feel alive	,404	2,473
	<b>3. Dependent Variable: feel harmony</b>		
	Feel happy	,315	3,171
	Feel relaxed	,318	3,141
	Feel amazed	,399	2,507
	Feel alive	,405	2,470
	Feel safe	,620	1,613
<b>Emotional attachment</b>	<b>1. Dependent Variable: I am emotionally attached with this place</b>		
	This places means a lot to me	,341	2,932
	This place is very special to me	,340	2,942
	No other place can provide the same holiday experience	,362	2,760
	It is not substitutional	,376	2,658
	Best place fo what I like to do	,534	1,872
	<b>2. Dependent Variable: Best place fo what I like to do</b>		
	I am emotionally attached with this place	,292	3,419
	This places means a lot to me	,222	4,508
	This place is very special to me	,343	2,914





	No other place can provide the same holiday experience	,381	2,623
	It is not substitutional	,389	2,571
	<b>3. Dependent Variable: No other place can provide the same holiday experience</b>		
	I am emotionally attached with this place	,292	3,427
	This places means a lot to me	,222	4,504
	This place is very special to me	,361	2,767
	It is not substitutional	,495	2,020
	Best place fo what I like to do	,561	1,782
	<b>4. Dependent Variable: This place means a lot to me</b>		
	I am emotionally attached with this place	,449	2,230
	This place is very special to me	,456	2,194
	It is not substitutional	,369	2,712
	Best place fo what I like to do	,533	1,876
	No other place can provide the same holiday experience	,363	2,758
	<b>5. Dependent Variable: It is not substitutional</b>		
	I am emotionally attached with this place	,300	3,333
	This place is very special to me	,343	2,918
	This places means a lot to me	,566	1,765
	Best place fo what I like to do	,490	2,040
	No other place can provide the same holiday experience	,224	4,473
	<b>6. Dependent Variable: This place is very special to me</b>		
	I am emotionally attached with this place	,292	3,422
	This places means a lot to me	,298	3,357
	Best place fo what I like to do	,539	1,856
	No other place can provide the same holiday experience	,386	2,593
	It is not substitutional	,370	2,706



<b>Intuitive fit</b>	<b>1. Dependent Variable: meets my needs perfectly</b>		
	uniqueness	,353	2,834
	authenticity	,373	2,680
	Psychologically comfortable	,431	2,322
	Feel special/unique	,535	1,870
	Fits my tastes perfectly	,421	2,376
	Care about the place	,392	2,554
	Have roots from this place	,960	1,042
	Feel sad if something bad happens	,534	1,874
	<b>2. Dependent Variable: uniqueness</b>		
	authenticity	,528	1,894
	Psychologically comfortable	,420	2,378
	Feel special/unique	,554	1,804
	Fits my tastes perfectly	,285	3,513
	Meets my needs perfectly	,302	3,314
	Care about the place	,389	2,572
	Have roots from this place	,958	1,044
	Feel sad if something bad happens	,536	1,866
	<b>3. Dependent Variable: care about the place</b>		
Uniqueness	,351	2,846	
Authenticity	,381	2,628	
Psychologically comfortable	,423	2,363	
Feel special/unique	,540	1,852	
Fits my tastes perfectly	,295	3,392	
Have roots from this place	,963	1,038	
Feel sad if something bad happens	,621	1,609	
<b>Long term relationship</b>	<b>1. Dependent Variable: loyal visitor</b>		
	I will visit this place the next time I go on vacations	,408	2,452
	I intend to keep visiting this place	,357	2,798
	I will be visiting this place for a long time	,258	3,871
	I expect that this place will be part of my life for a long time	,312	3,210
	I have a sense of long term	,280	3,569



	commitment with this place		
	<b>2. Dependent Variable: I will visit this place the next time I go on vacations</b>		
	Loyal visitor of this place	,404	2,475
	I intend to keep visiting this place	,393	2,545
	I will be visiting this place for a long time	,270	3,710
	I expect that this place will be part of my life for a long time	,312	3,206
	I have a sense of long term commitment with this place	,265	3,769
	<b>3. Dependent Variable: I expect that this place will be part of my life for a long time</b>		
	Loyal visitor of this place	,390	2,563
	I intend to keep visiting this place	,324	3,083
	I will visit this place the next time I go on vacations	,394	2,536
	I will be visiting this place for a long time	,288	3,472
	I have a sense of long term commitment with this place	,339	2,946

### 5.3.4. NORMALITY TEST

#### 5.3.4.1. SKEWENESS AND KURTOSIS

The two main criteria for evaluating the distribution of data are skeweness and kurtosis. The skewness value indicates the symmetry of the distribution or in other words it determines *“the extent to which a variable’s distribution is symmetrical. If the distribution of responses for a variable stretches toward the right or left tail of the distribution, then the distribution is referred to as skewed”* (Hair et al., 2014: 54). Hence, skewness indicates whether the data in question is right or left-tailed, and in what extent. On the other hand, kurtosis is *“a measure of whether the distribution is too peaked (a very narrow distribution with most of the responses in the center)”*



(Hair et al., 2014: 54). In a nutshell, kurtosis gives information about the ‘peakedness’ of the distribution or how flat the data tails are compared to a normal distribution. Skewness or Kurtosis of “0” value denotes a statistical normal distribution (Hair et al., 2014). However, this “0” condition is almost impossible to be achieved in most empirical studies of the social sciences. Non-zero Skewness or Kurtosis values are more common to be encountered in social sciences (Jiang, 2019). A Skewness value of greater than +1 or lower than -1 indicates substantially non-normal distribution; similarly, a Kurtosis value of bigger than +1 or less than -1 means peaked or flat distribution respectively (Hair et al., 2014). Thus, if the Skewness and Kurtosis values both fall between +1 and -1, it means that the tested data follow normal distribution (Hair et al., 2014). However, according to other academics (e.g., Trochim & Donnelly, 2006; Field, 2009; Mallery & George, 2010; Gravetter & Wallnau, 2014) the values of skewness and kurtosis should be within the range of  $-/+2$  so that they can be considered normally distributed.

The data view in SPSS provides values of Skewness and Kurtosis of all variables. Some of the indicators Kurtosis and Skewness did not fall into the range of -1 to +1. With reasonably large samples, skewness will not “*make a substantive difference in the analysis*” (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001:74). Kurtosis can result in an underestimate of the variance, but this risk is also reduced with a large sample (200+ cases: see Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001: 75).

While there are tests one can use to evaluate skewness and kurtosis values (e.g., Shapiro-Wilk, Kolmogorov-Smirnov), these are too sensitive with large samples (Pullant, 2001), like this study sample. Tabachnick and Fidell (2001: 73) recommend inspecting the shape of the distribution (e.g. by using a histogram). Shapiro-Wilk and Kolmogorov-Smirnov statistics assess the normality of the distribution of scores. A non-significant result (sig value of more than .05) indicates normality (Pullant, 2001). Sig value of less than .05 indicates violation of the assumption of normality. In this study sample, there was a violation of the assumption of normality of all items (Kolmogorov-Smirnov test). However, this is quite common in larger samples (Pullant, 2001). Many scales and measures used in the social sciences have scores that are skewed, either positively or negatively. This does not necessarily indicate a



problem with the scale, but rather reflects the underlying nature of the construct being measured (Pullant, 2001). For instance, life satisfaction measures are usually negatively skewed, with the majority of individuals being reasonably happy with their lot in life (Pullant, 2001). On the other hand, clinical measures of anxiety or depression are usually positively skewed in the general population, with the majority of people recording relatively few symptoms of these disorders (Pullant, 2001). It should be stressed that tourism industry is a generator of happiness, pleasure, highly fulfilling, fun, satisfaction and positive experiences (Vogt & Fesenmaier, 1995; Pearce, 2007) and thus tourists can be particularly prone to overrating their tourism experiences, because the travel nature itself is positive (Vogt & Fesenmaier, 1995). This can explain the slight skeweness and kurtosis of the data.

The univariate distribution of almost all indicators were deemed acceptable since the striking majority of the mean kurtosis and mean skewness fell within the range of - 1 and +1 (Mhthen & Kaplan, 1985) and -2 and +2 (e.g., Trochim & Donnelly, 2006; Field, 2009; Mallery & George, 2010; Gravetter & Wallnau, 2014). Afterwards, descriptive statistics was performed such as mean, median, minimum, and maximum analyses to assess the sample deviation patterns concerning multivariate normality. The distribution of standardized deviations (SD) displayed no obvious cues of non-normality. Table 24 shows that the indicators are within two standard deviations around their respective means.

Table 24: Normality test results

Constructs and items	Mean	Standard Deviation	Kurtosis	Skeweness
<i>Self love</i>				
Self-definition	5,36	1,46	,659	-,964
Best version of me	5,43	1,4	,555	-,863
Self-appreciation	5,22	1,43	-,072	-,638
Self-definition	5,42	1,45	,878	-1,003
Stimulates all my senses	5,68	1,27	,732	-,938
Self-confidence	5,14	1,54	,193	-,761



Self-awareness	5,23	1,50	,134	-,764
understand the real values in life	5,46	1,47	,623	-1,004
Self-investment	5,67	1,36	,830	-1,018
Self-fulfillment	5,7	1,29	,685	-,975
Self-balance	5,41	1,43	,787	-,951
Self-actualization	5,38	1,54	,322	-,910
inspiration	5,9	1,26	2,409	,198

---

***Passionate/romantic-  
driven behavior***

Passionate desire to visit this place	5,76	1,27	,971	-1,083
I feel passionate for this place	5,74	1,17	-,025	-,708
Sense of longing	5,61	1,36	1,366	-1,109
Feel attracted by this place	5,95	1,05	,560	-,854
It triggers my romantic feelings	4,87	1,57	-,256	-,493
Spend time passionately	5,27	1,50	,154	-,818

---

***Nostalgia & frequent  
thoughts***

Feel nostalgic	5,27	1,53	-,117	-,687
Miss this place often	5,04	1,63	-,532	-,534
Feel sad if not able to visit it	4,74	1,80	-,659	-,447
If I could never visit this place again, I would be miserable	4,65	1,78	-,557	-,467
I frequently think of this place	5,12	1,52	-,756	-,353
This place comes directly to mind when I want to go	5,47	1,33	,276	-,691



on vacations

I feel happy when I think of 5,85 1,07 ,187 -,716

this place

I frequently find myself 5,45 1,43 -,667 -,529

thinking about visiting this

place

---

***Love stemming from locals***

affection 5,32 1,34 -,137 -,530

Feel welcomed 5,81 1,13 ,131 -,797

Mutual understanding 5,36 1,29 ,050 -,589

Feel connection with locals 5,18 1,33 -,308 -,392

affinity 5,14 1,41 -,247 -,492

Share the same values 5,14 1,34 ,147 -,517

Kind locals 5,92 1,10 -,272 -,786

hospitality 5,86 1,13 -,137 -,768

interpersonal relationships 5,04 1,64 -,144 -,734

with locals

Friendly locals 5,89 1,12 ,110 -,850

Love locals 5,58 1,28 -,141 -,601

---

***Self-identity***

this place helps present 5,10 1,32 ,322 -439

myself to other as the

person I want to be

This place makes me look 5,11 1,38 ,123 -,485

like I want to look

This place makes me feel 5,45 1,28 ,508 -,703

like I want to feel

It reflects myself 4,90 1,59 -,158 -,551

I belong to this place 4,94 1,63 -,389 -,516

It is part of myself 4,92 1,67 -,377 -,557

---



<b><i>Familiarity</i></b>				
Feel like I am home	5,08	1,58	,228	-,756
It reminds me of home	4,26	1,84	-,821	-,224
<b><i>Self-expansion</i></b>				
Way of thinking	5,06	1,52	-,038	-,576
Broadened competences	4,95	1,66	-,156	-,667
Broadened interests	5,15	1,63	,154	-,855
New perspectives	5,02	1,67	-,152	-,694
<b><i>Life meaning rewards</i></b>				
Meaningful life	5,00	1,46	-,229	-,475
Worthliving life	5,18	1,42	,066	-,611
Inherently important	5,06	1,52	-,252	-,508
Frequently thinking of it	5,45	1,34	-,210	-,570
It comes directly to mind for vacations	5,73	1,19	,557	-,827
<b><i>Positive emotions/psychological states</i></b>				
Feel happy	6,22	,89	2,166	-1,286
Feel relaxed	6,20	,88	1,973	-1,201
Feel harmonious	6	1,05	-,047	-,811
Feel amazed	5,92	1,15	-,254	-,811
Feel alive	5,72	1,32	1,407	-1,157
Feel safe	5,75	1,26	,478	-,938
<b><i>Emotional attachment</i></b>				
I'm emotionally attached	5,30	1,48	-,186	-,608
It means a lot to me	5,39	1,42	-,547	-,508
It is very special for me	5,49	1,51	1,199	-1,139
No other place can provide the same experience	4,94	1,63	-,408	-,549
There is not substitute	4,77	1,64	-,448	-,408
Best place for what I like to	5,40	1,27	,120	-,567





do

---

***Intuitive fit***

Uniqueness	5,88	1,18	-,479	-,765
authenticity	5,91	1,06	-,652	-,580
Feel special	4,86	1,88	-,664	-,626
Feel psychologically comfortable	5,53	1,29	,029	-,600
Meets my needs perfectly	5,61	1,18	-,452	-,485
Fits my tastes perfectly	5,64	1,19	,094	-,637
I do care about the place	5,61	1,30	,182	-,739
I have roots from this place	1,85	1,64	2,927	1,997
Feel sad if something bad happens to this place	5,65	1,38	,697	-,976

---

***Long term relationship***

I will visit this place the next time I go on vacations	5,05	1,54	-,130	-,571
I intend to keep visiting this place	5,38	1,43	-,260	-,617
I am a loyal visitor of this place	4,82	1,70	-,445	-,514
I will be visting this place for a long time	5,36	1,51	-,472	-,610
I expect that this place will be part of mylife for a long time	5,38	1,67	,289	-,974
I have a sense of long term commitment with this place	5,18	1,64	-,543	-,548

---

Note: A 7-point Likert Scale was used for all items. For all items listed out above, the min values are 1, and the max values are 7.



### 5.3.5. SEGMENTATION BASED ON DESTINATION LOVE CONSTRUCTS: TOURISTS' DEMOGRAPHIC AND BEHAVIORAL SEGMENTATION FOR EACH CONSTRUCT

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The striking majority of the participants of all nationalities, of both genders, of all educational levels, monthly income and age ranges who scored high on destination love, prefer self-administered vacations across all destination love sub-constructs, travel as a couple, as well as with family (children) or friends, spend more than 5 nights (mainly 5-7 nights) at their most favorite destination, got informed about their most favorite destination via WOM and social media, prefer to visit attractions at their most favorite destination, relax or get in touch with locals and their culture and prefer to stay at hotels or rental rooms. Following the procedure of Dolnicar & Mazanec (2000), destination love constructs are defined in the next step by cross-tabulating the tourists' behavioral and the demographic characteristics. Individuals who scored 5 or higher (in a 7-point Likert scale) on each destination love construct were included in the following crosstabulation analyses:

#### 5.3.5.1. ANTHROPOMORPHISM

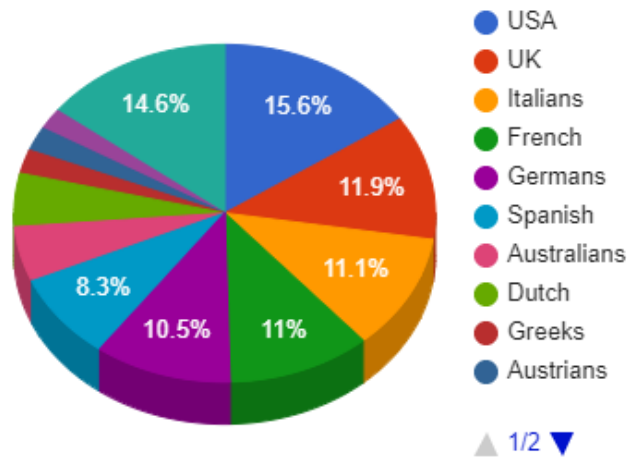
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##### NATIONALITY

15.6% of people who scored high on anthropomorphism came from the USA; 11,9% from the UK; 11.1% Italians; 11% French; 10.5% Germans; 8.3% Spanish; 5.3% Australians; 5.1% Dutch; 2.3% Greeks; 2.3% Austrians and 2% Canadians and 14.6% from other countries.



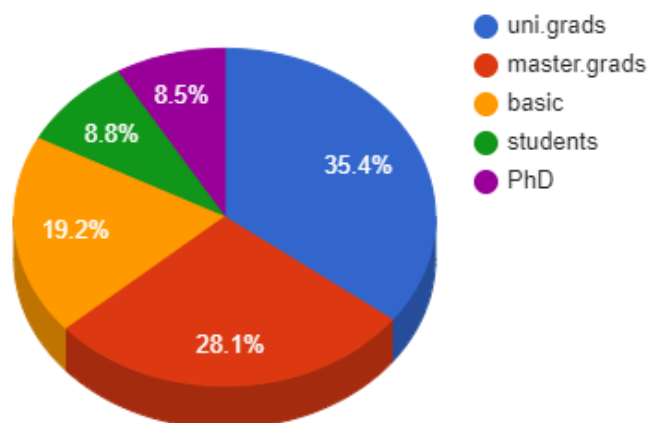
Nationality



EDUCATIONAL LEVEL

35.4% of people who scored high on anthropomorphism were university/college graduates; 28.1% master graduates; 19.2% basic level; 8.8% students and 8.5% PhD.

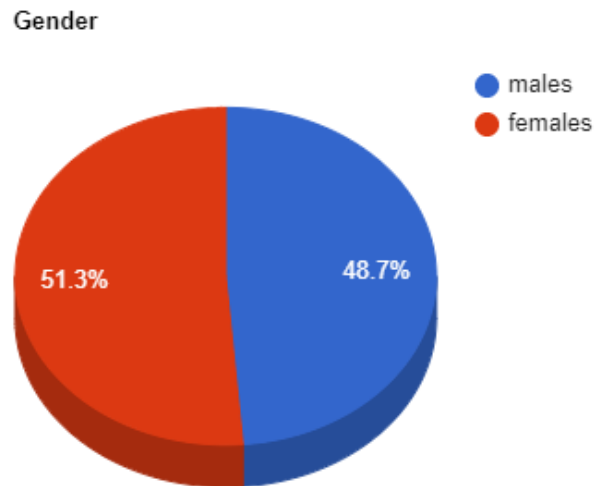
Educational Level





### GENDER

48.7% of those who scored high on anthropomorphism were males and 51.3% females.

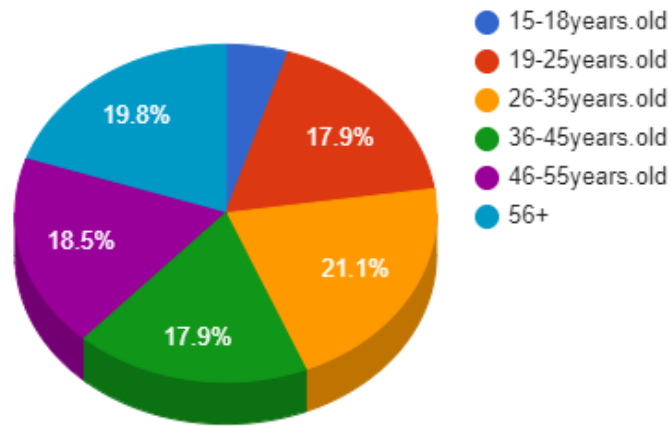


### AGE

21.1% of those who scored high on anthropomorphism were 26-35 years old; 19.8% 56 years old or more; 18.5% were 46-55 years old; 17.9% were 36-45 years old; 17.9% were 19-25 years old and 4.8% were between 15 -18 years old.



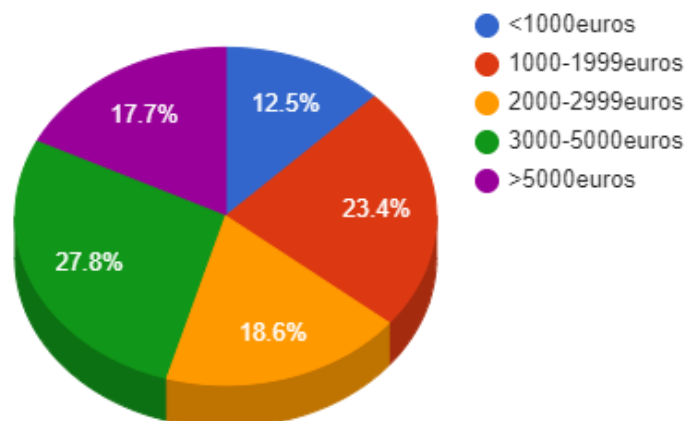
Age



#### MONTHLY INCOME

27.8% of those who scored high on anthropomorphism earn from 3000-5000 euros per month; 23.4% from 1000 to 1999 euros; 18.6% from 2000-2999 euros; 17.7% more than 5000 euros and 12.5% under 1000 euros.

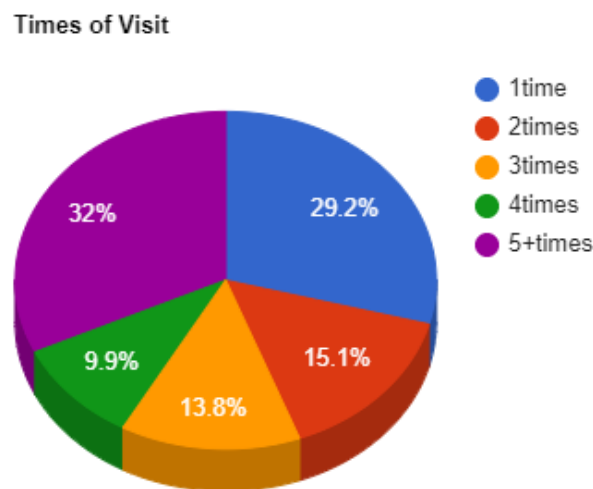
Monthly Income





### TIMES OF VISIT

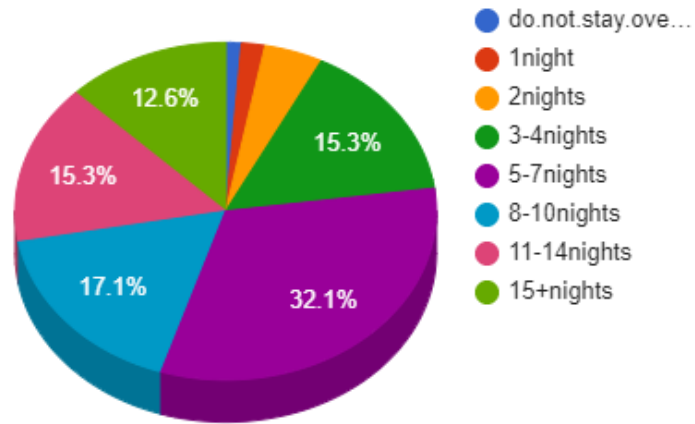
The majority of the participants who scored high on anthropomorphism have visited their most favorite destination five or more than five times (32%). 29.2% of them have visited it only one time, 15.1% two times, 13.8% three times and 9.9% four times.



### LENGTH OF STAY

Most of the participants who scored high on anthropomorphisation spend on average 5 to 7 nights at their most favorite destination (32.1%). In addition, 17.1% spend on average 8-10 nights, 15.3% spend 11-14 nights, 15.3% spend 3-4 nights, 12.6% spend there 15 or more nights, 4.5% two nights, 1.8% one night and 1.2 % do not stay overnight.

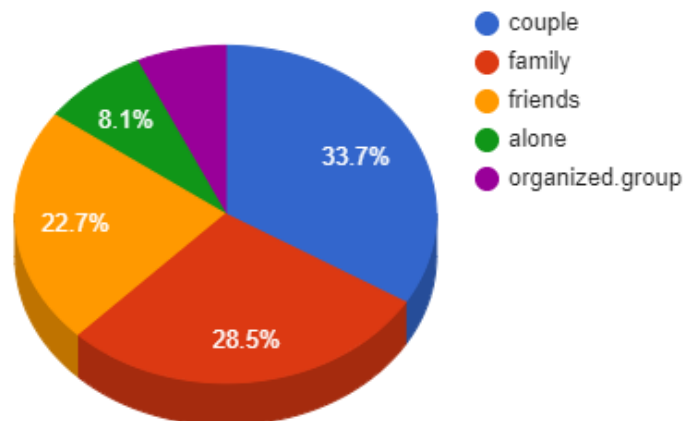
Length of stay



#### WAY OF TRAVEL (HOLIDAY GROUP)

Most of the participants who scored high on anthropomorphism travel as a couple (33.7%) and with their family (28.5%). 22.7% of them travel with their friends, 8.1% travel alone and 6.9% travel as a part of an organized group.

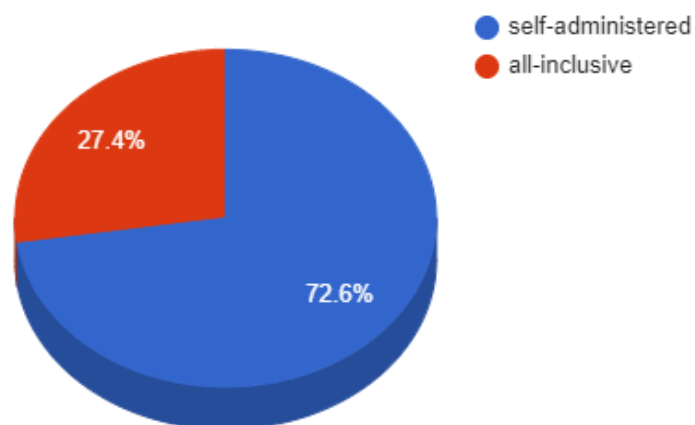
Way of travel



### PREFERABLE TRAVEL PACKAGES

Most of the participants (72.6%) who scored high on anthropomorphism prefer self-administered vacations (buy each tourism service separately) and 27.4% prefer all inclusive packages.

Preferable travel packages

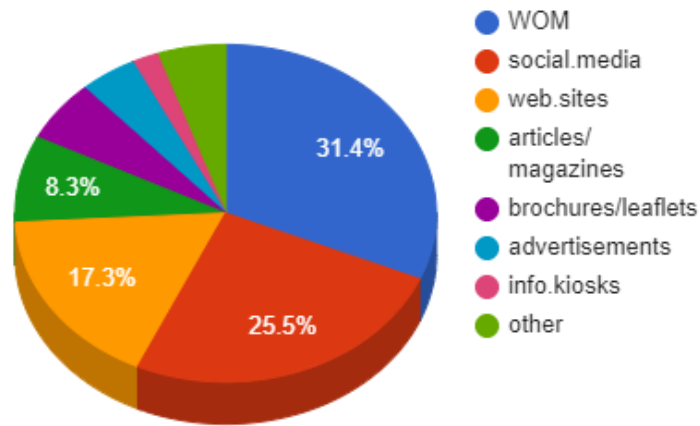


### MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR THAT INFLUENCED TOURISTS' DECISION TO VISIT THEIR MOST FAVORITE DESTINATION

The striking majority of people who scored high on anthropomorphism were influenced by positive WOM from relatives/friends (31.4%) and social media, tripadvisor etc (25.5%). 17.3% of them were influenced by the official web sites of the destination and other web sites, 8,3% by articles intourism and travel magazines, 5.9% by brochures and leaflets of travel agents, 5.3% by other (e.g., books, conferences, job, studies, festivals, cruises), 4.4% by advertisements on tv/radio/newspapers/magazines/cinema etc, and 2% by information Kiosks of the destination's National Tourism Organization.



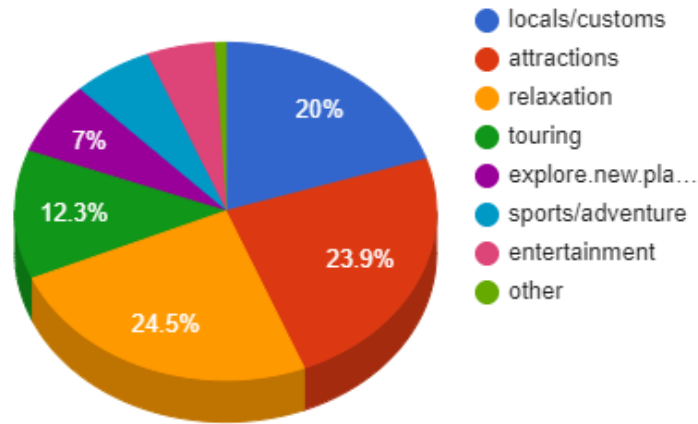
most important factor



#### MOST IMPORTANT ACTIVITIES DURING HOLIDAYS

The striking majority of people who scored high on anthropomorphism stated that their most important activity during their holidays at their most favorite destination is relaxation (24.5%), to visit historical sights or attractions of the destination (23.9%) and get in touch with local people and their culture (20%). Moreover, 12.3% stated that they tour at this destination, 7% explore new places/areas at this destination, 6.1% sports/adventure seeking, 5.2% entertainment and 0.9% other (e.g., shopping, events).

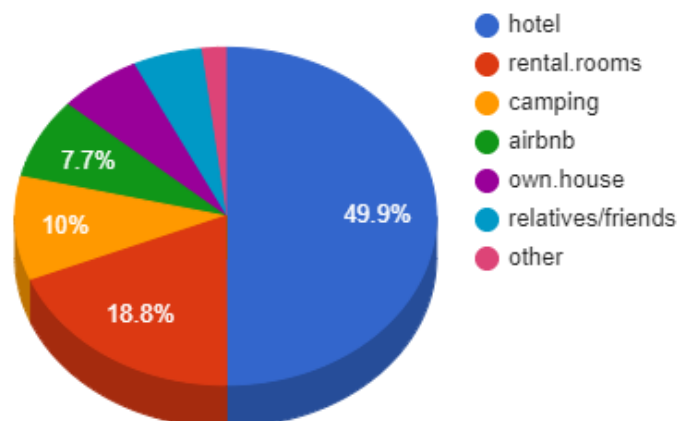
### most important activities



### TYPE OF ACCOMMODATION

The striking majority of people who scored high on anthropomorphism prefer staying at hotels (49.9%) and rental rooms (18.8%). Moreover, 10% stated that they prefer camping; 7.7% prefer AirBnB; 6.3% stay at their own house; 5.3% stay at relatives/friends and 1.9% other (cruise ships, backpacking, hostels).

### Type of Accommodation

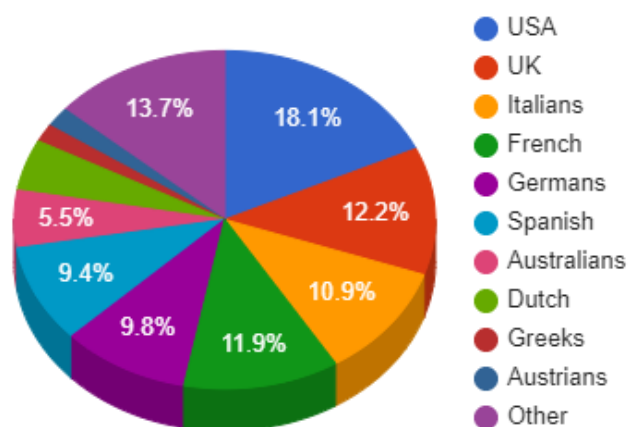


### 5.3.5.2. EMOTIONAL SOLIDARITY

#### NATIONALITY

18.1% of those who scored high on emotional solidarity with locals came from the USA; 12.2% were British; 11.9% French; 10.9% Italians; 9.8% Germans; 9.4% Spanish; 5.5% Australians; 4.9% Dutch; 1.9% Austrians; 1.7% Greeks and 13.7 from other countries.

Nationality

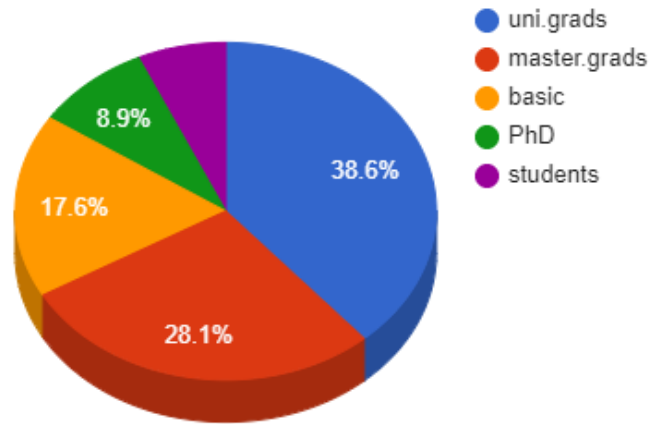


#### EDUCATIONAL LEVEL

38,6% of those who scored high on emotional solidarity with locals were university/college graduates; 28,1% master graduates; 17,6% of basic education; 8,9% PhD and 6,8% students.



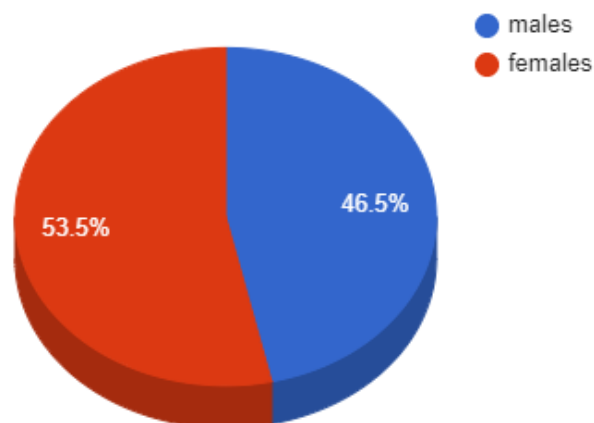
Educational Level



### GENDER

46.5% of those who scored high on emotional solidarity with locals were males and 53.5% females.

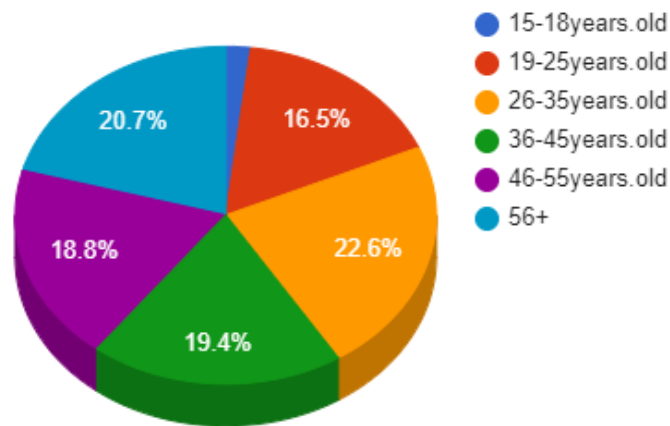
Gender



### AGE

22.6% of those who scored high on emotional solidarity with locals were 26-35 years old; 20.7% were 56 years old or more; 19.4% were 36-45 years old; 18.8% were 46-55 years old; 16.5% were from 19-25 years old and 1.9% were 15-18 years old.

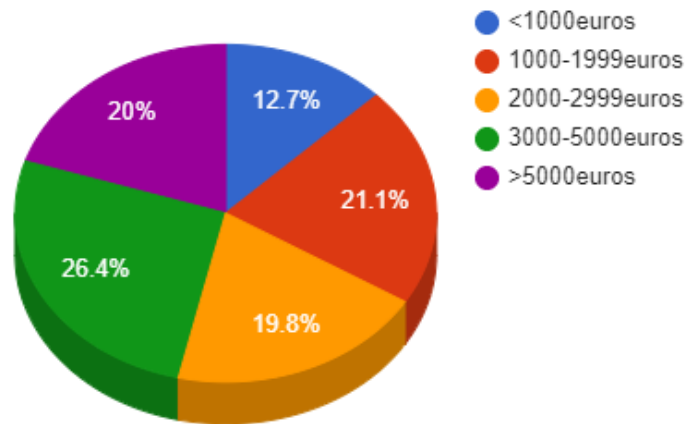
Age



### MONTHLY INCOME

26.4% of those who scored high on emotional solidarity with locals earn from 3000-5000 euros per month; 21.1% from 1000 to 1999 euros; 20% more than 5000 euros; 19.8% from 2000 to 2999 euros and 12.7% under 1000 euros.

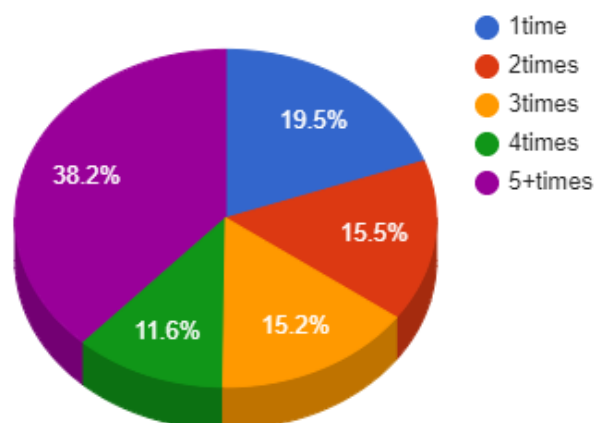
Monthly Income



#### TIMES OF VISIT

The majority of respondents who scored high on emotional solidarity with locals have visited their most favorite destination five or more times (38,2%). 19,5% of them have visited it only one time, 15,5% two times, 15,2% three times and 11,6% four times.

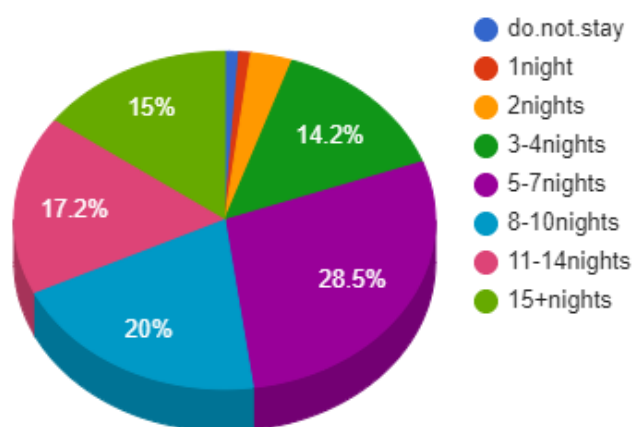
Times of Visit



### LENGTH OF STAY

Most of the participants who scored high on emotional solidarity with locals spend on average 5 to 7 nights at their most favorite destination (28.5%). In addition, 20% spend on average 8-10 nights, 17.2% spend 11-14 nights, 15% spend there 15 or more nights, 14.2% spend 3-4 nights, 3.2% two nights, 1.1% do not stay overnight and 0.9% one night.

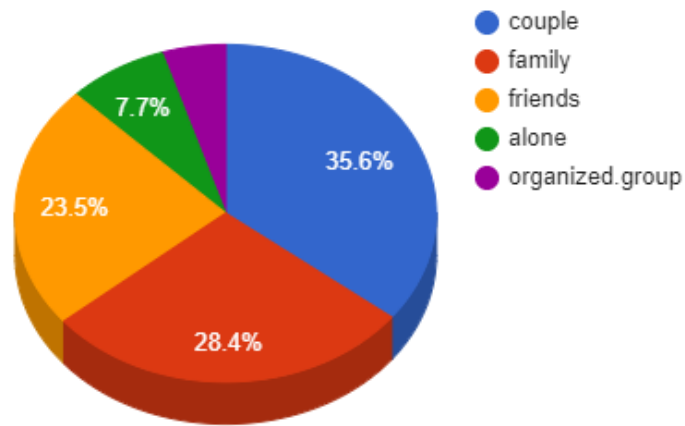
Length of stay



### WAY OF TRAVEL (HOLIDAY GROUP)

Most of the participants who scored high on emotional solidarity with locals travel as a couple (35.6%) and with their family (28.4%). 23.5% of them travel with their friends, 7.7% travel alone and 4.9% travel as a part of an organized group.

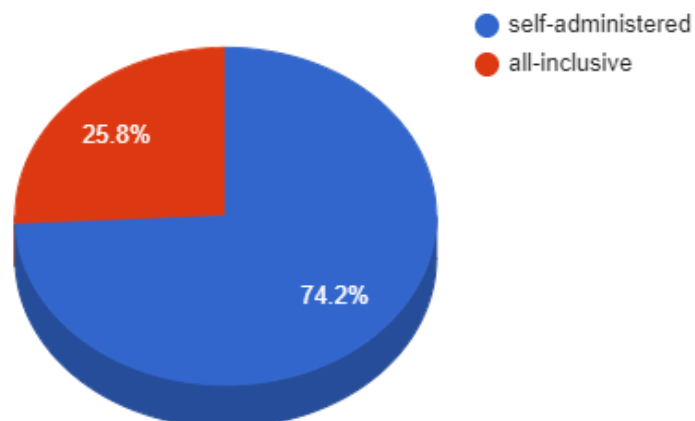
Way of travel



#### PREFERABLE TRAVEL PACKAGES

Most of the participants (74.2%) who scored high on emotional solidarity with locals prefer self-administered vacations (buy each tourism service separately) and 25.8% prefer all inclusive packages.

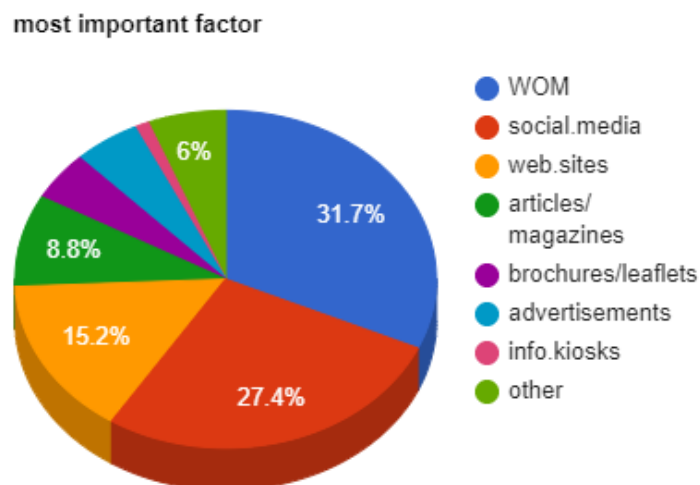
Preferable travel packages





### MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR THAT INFLUENCED TOURISTS' DECISION TO VISIT THEIR MOST FAVORITE DESTINATION

The striking majority of people who scored high on emotional solidarity with locals were influenced by positive WOM (31.7%) and social media, tripadvisor etc (27.4%). 15.2% of them were influenced by the official web sites of the destination and other web sites, 8.8% by articles in tourism and travel magazines, 6% by other (e.g., books, conferences, job, studies, festivals, cruises), 5.1% by advertisements on tv/radio/newspapers/magazines/cinema etc, 4.7% by brochures and leaflets of travel agents, and 1.1% by information Kiosks of the destination's National Tourism Organization.



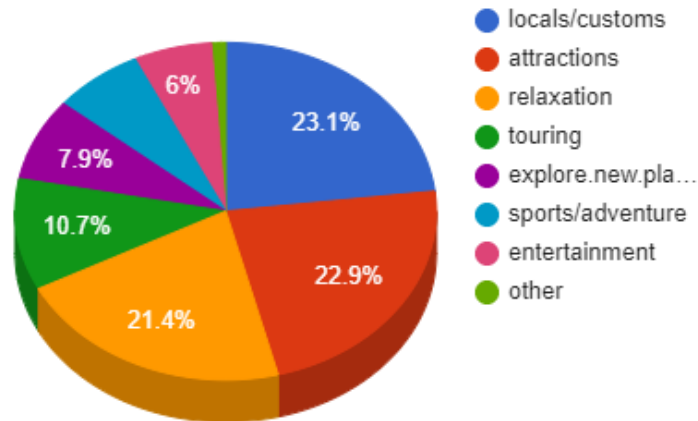
### MOST IMPORTANT ACTIVITIES DURING HOLIDAYS

The striking majority of people who scored high on emotional solidarity with locals stated that their most important activity during their holidays at their most favorite destination is to get in touch with local people and their culture (23.1%), visit historical sights or attractions of the destination (22.9%) and relaxation (21.4%). Moreover, 10.7% stated that they tour at this destination, 7.9% explore new



places/areas at this destination, 6.9% sports/adventure seeking, 6% entertainment and 1.1% other (e.g., shopping, events).

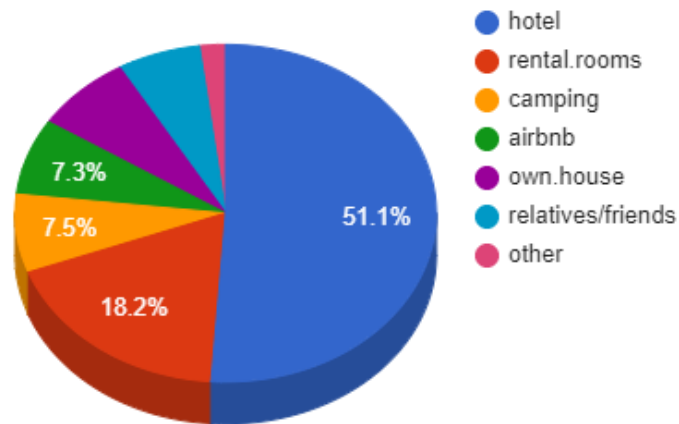
most important activities



#### TYPE OF ACCOMMODATION

The striking majority of people who scored high on emotional solidarity with locals prefer staying at hotels (51.1%) and rental rooms (18.2%). Moreover, 7.5% stated that they prefer camping; 7.5% stay at their own house; 7.3% prefer AirBnB; 6.4% stay at relatives/friends and 2% other (cruise ships, backpacking, hostels).

Type of Accommodation



### 5.3.5.3. PASSIONATE/ROMANTIC DRIVEN BEHAVIOR TOWARDS THE LOVED DESTINATION

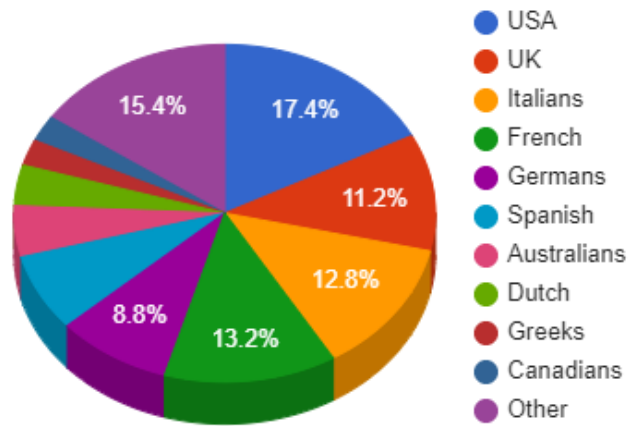
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#### NATIONALITY

17.4% of people who scored high on passionate/romantic driven behavior towards their most favorite destination came from the USA; 13.2% were French; 12.8% Italians; 11.2% British; 8.8% Germans; 7.4% Spanish; 4.9% Australians; 3.9% Dutch; 2.5% Greek; 2.5% Canadians and 15.4% from other countries.



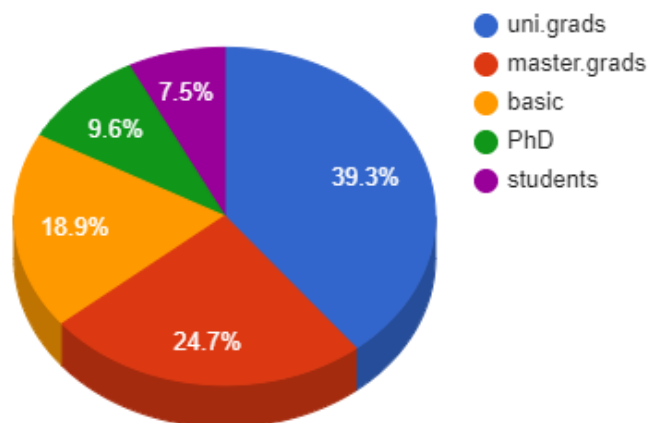
Nationality



**EDUCATIONAL LEVEL**

39.3% of people who scored high on passionate/romantic driven behavior towards their most favorite destination were university/college graduates; 24.7% master graduates; 18.9% of basic education; 9.6% PhD and 7.5% students.

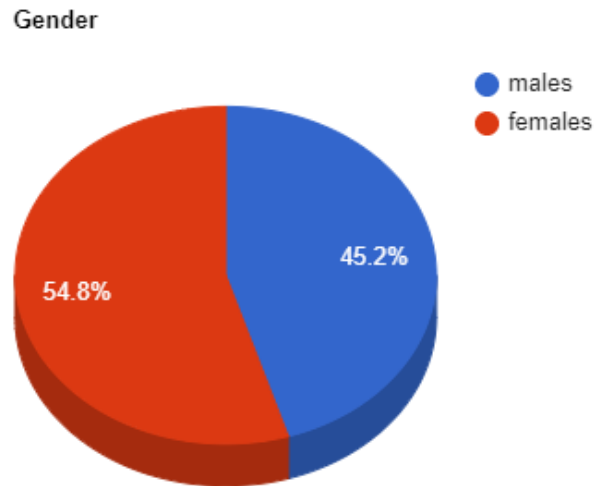
Educational Level





### GENDER

45.2% of people who scored high on passionate/romantic driven behavior towards their most favorite destination were males and 54.8% females

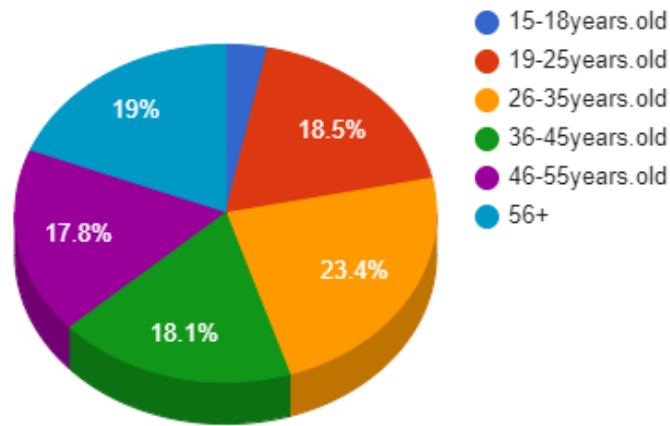


### AGE

23.4% of people who scored high on passionate/romantic driven behavior towards their most favorite destination were 26-35 years old; 19% were 56 or more years old; 18.5% were 19-25 years old; 18.1% were 36-45 years old; 17.8% were 46-55 years old and 3.2% were 15-18 years old



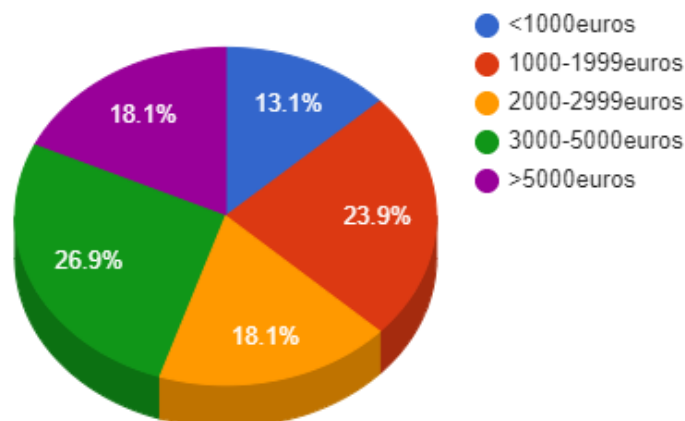
Age



#### MONTHLY INCOME

26.9% of people who scored high on passionate/romantic driven behavior towards their most favorite destination earn from 3000-5000 euros per month; 23.9% from 1000 to 1999 euros; 18.1% from 2000 to 2999 euros; 18.1% more than 5000 euros and 13.1% under 1000 euros

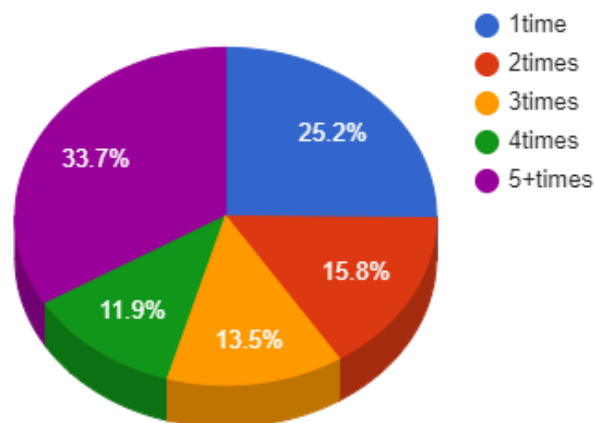
Monthly Income



### TIMES OF VISIT

33.7% of people who scored high on passionate/romantic driven behavior toward their most favorite destination have visited it five or more times. 25.2% of them have visited it one time, 15.8% two times, 13.5% three times and 11.9% four times.

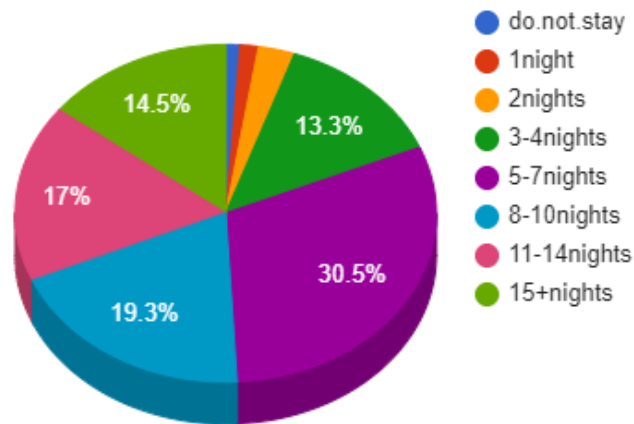
Times of Visit



### LENGTH OF STAY

Most of the participants who scored high on passionate/romantic driven behavior towards the destination spend on average 5 to 7 nights at their most favorite destination (30.5%). In addition, 19.3% spend on average 8-10 nights, 17% spend 11-14 nights, 14.5% spend there 15 or more nights, 13.3% spend 3-4 nights, 2.8% two nights, 1.4% one night and only 1.1 % do not stay overnight

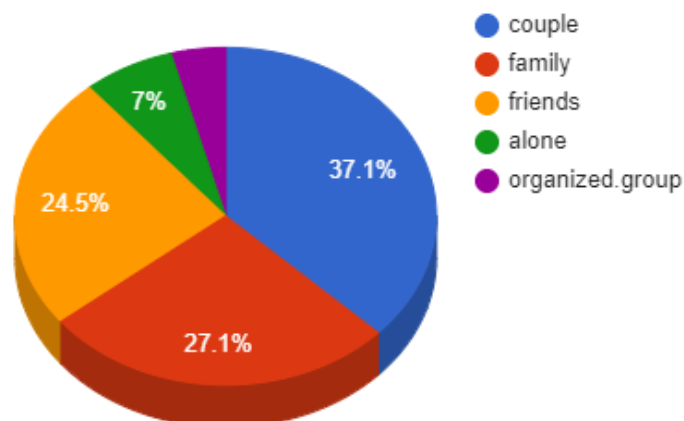
Length of stay



#### WAY OF TRAVEL (HOLIDAY GROUP)

Most of the participants who scored high on passionate/romantic driven behavior towards the destination travel as a couple (37.1%) and with their family (27.1%). 24.5% of them travel with their friends, 7% travel alone and 4.2% travel as a part of an organized group.

Way of travel

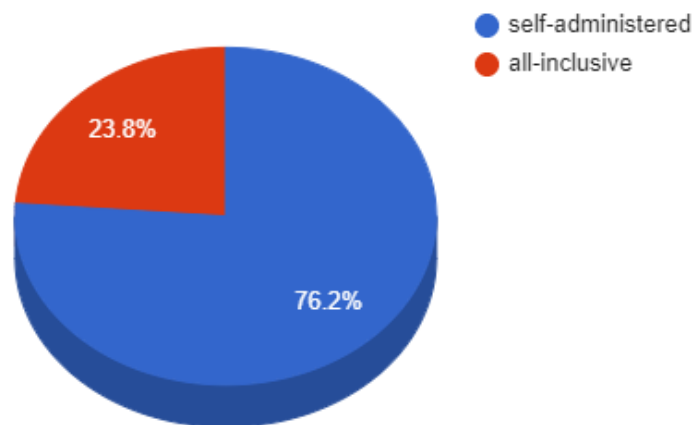




### PREFERABLE TRAVEL PACKAGES

Most of the participants (76.2%) who scored high on passionate/romantic driven behavior towards the most favorite destination prefer self-administered vacations (buy each tourism service separately) and 23.8% prefer all inclusive packages.

Preferable travel packages

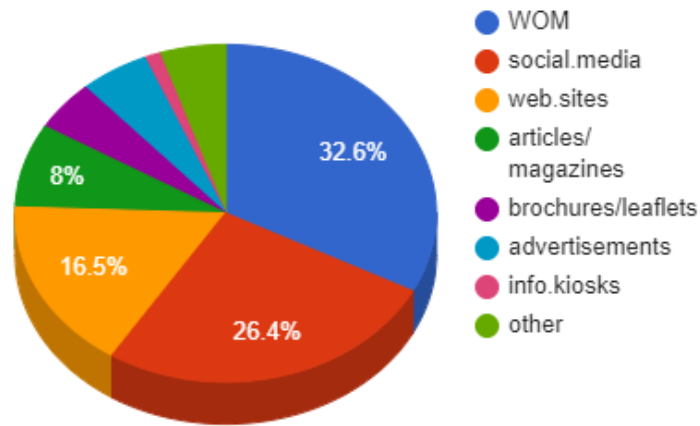


### MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR THAT INFLUENCED TOURISTS' DECISION TO VISIT THEIR MOST FAVORITE DESTINATION

The striking majority of people who scored high on passionate/romantic driven behavior towards destination were influenced by positive WOM (32.6%) and social media, tripadvisor etc (26.4%). 16.5% of them were influenced by the official web sites of the destination and other web sites, 8% by articles in tourism and travel magazines, 5.3% by advertisements on tv/radio/newspapers/magazines/cinema etc, 5.1 % by other (e.g., books, conferences, job, studies, festivals, cruises), 4.8% by brochures and leaflets of travel agents, and 1.2% by information Kiosks of the destination's National Tourism Organization.



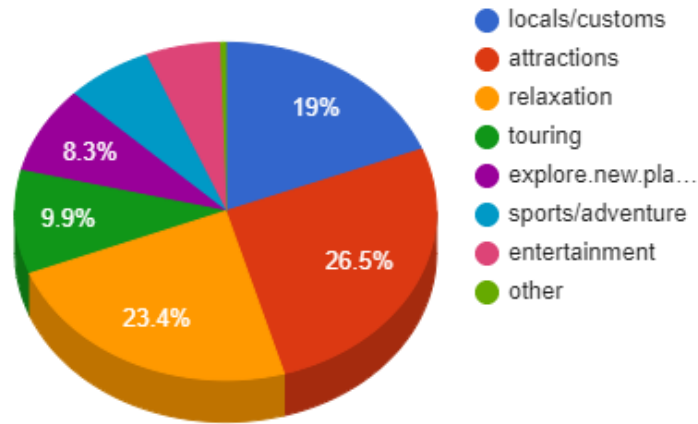
most important factor



#### MOST IMPORTANT ACTIVITIES DURING HOLIDAYS

The striking majority of people who scored high on passionate/romantic driven behavior towards the destination stated that their most important activity during their holidays at their most favorite destination is to visit historical sights or attractions of the destination (26.5%), relaxation (23.4%), and get in touch with local people and their culture (19%). Moreover, 9.9% stated that they tour at this destination, 8.3% explore new places/areas at this destination, 6.6% sports/adventure seeking, 5.7% entertainment and 0.5% other (e.g., shopping, events).

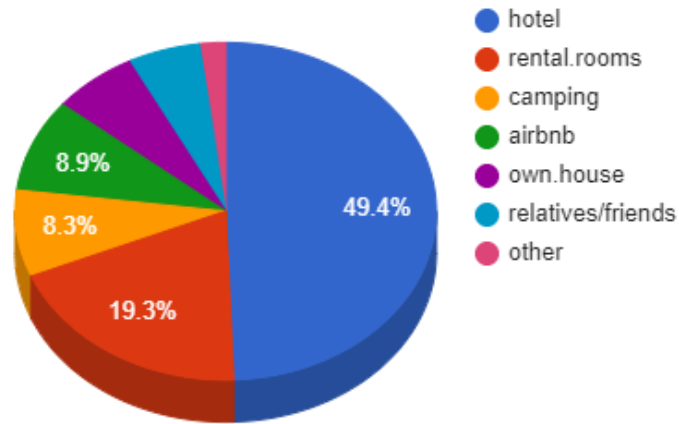
most important activities



#### TYPE OF ACCOMMODATION

The striking majority of people who scored high on passionate/romantic driven behavior towards the destination prefer staying at hotels (49.4%) and rental rooms (19.3%). Moreover, 8.9% prefer AirBnB; 8,3% stated that they prefer camping; 6.5% stay at their own house; 5.6% stay at relatives/friends and 2% other (cruise ships, backpacking, hostels).

Type of Accommodation



#### 5.3.5.4. LONG-TERM RELATIONSHIP

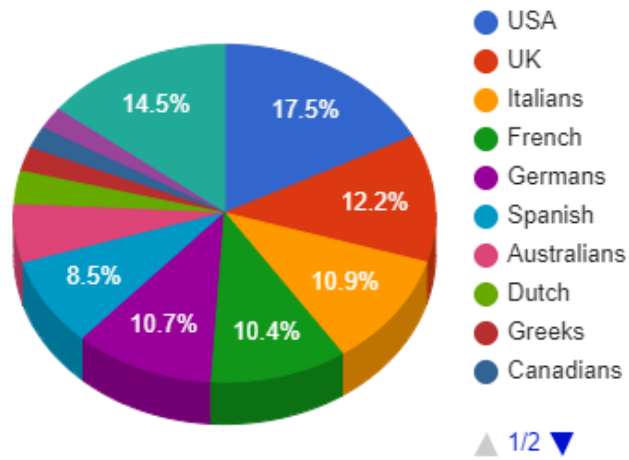
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##### NATIONALITY

17.5% of those who scored high on long-term relationship with destination came from the USA; 12.2% British; 10.9% Italians; 10.7% Germans; 10,4% French; 8.5% Spanish; 5.6% Australians; 3.2% Dutch; 2.3% Greeks; 2.1% Austrians; 2.1% Canadians and 14.5% from other countries



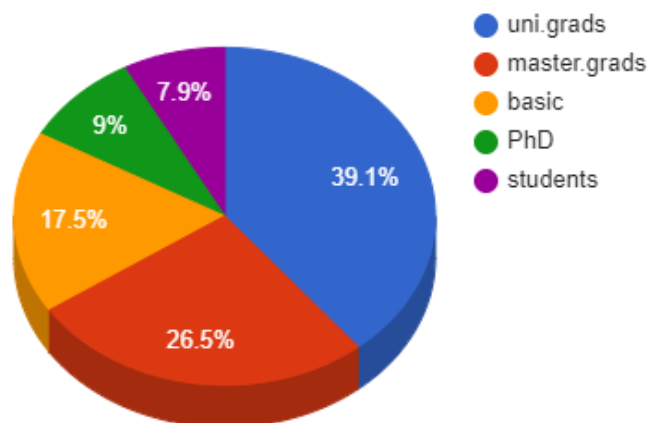
Nationality



**EDUCATIONAL LEVEL**

39.1% of those who scored high on long-term relationship with destination were university/college graduates; 26.5% master graduates; 17.5% of basic/high school level; 9% PhD and 7.9% students.

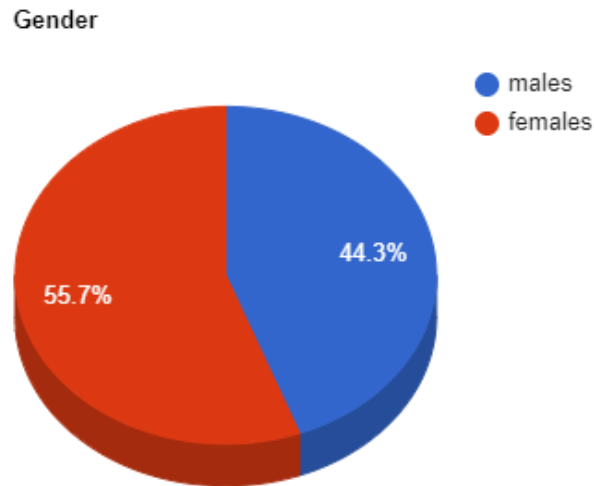
Educational Level





### GENDER

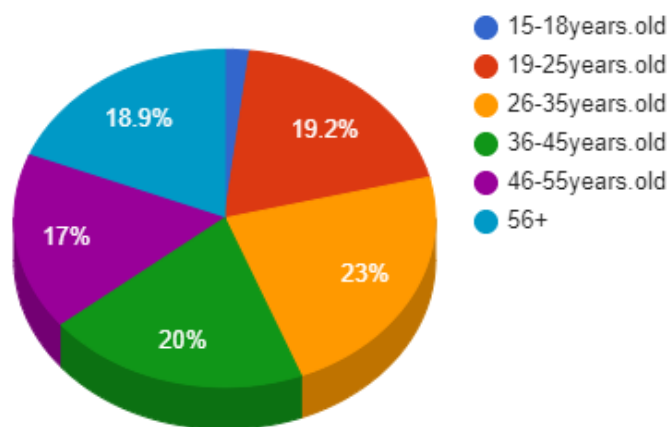
44.3% of those who scored high on long-term relationship with destination were males and 55.7% females



### AGE

23% of those who scored high on long-term relationship with destination were 26-35 years old; 20% were 36-45 years old; 19.2% were 19-25 years old; 18.9% were 56 or more years old; 17% were 46-55 years old and 1.9% were 15-18 years old.

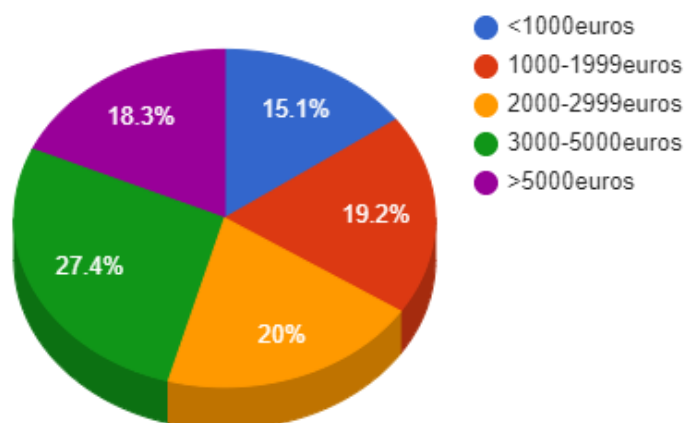
Age



#### MONTHLY INCOME

27.4% of those who scored high on long-term relationship with destination earn from 3000 to 5000 euros per month; 20% earn from 2000 to 2999 euros; 19.2% earn 1000-1999 euros; 18.3% earn more than 5000 euros and 15.1% earn under 1000 euros.

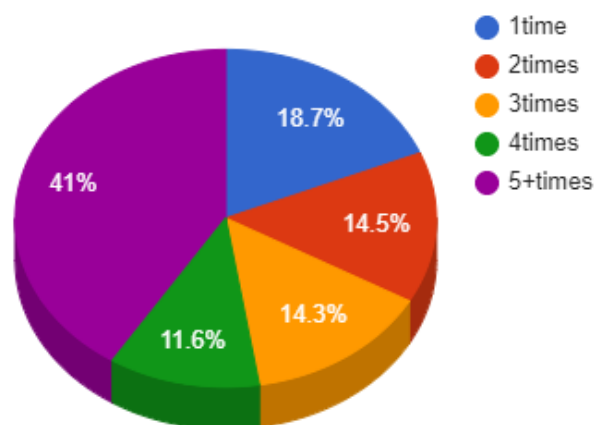
Monthly Income



### TIMES OF VISIT

Most of the participants who scored high on long-term relationship with destination have visited it five or more times (41%), 18.7% one time, 14.5% two times, 14.3% three times and 11.6% four times.

Times of Visit



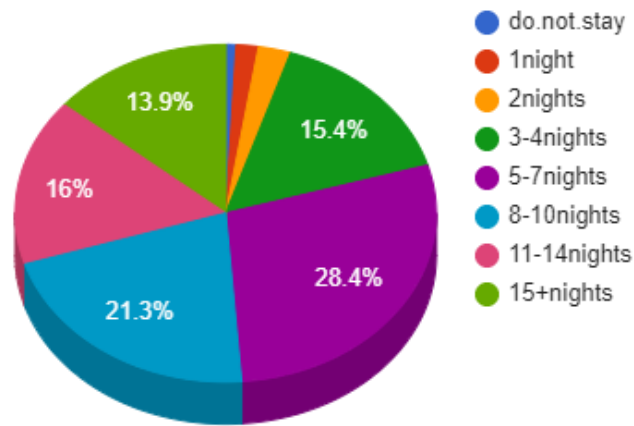
### LENGTH OF STAY

Most of the participants who scored high on long-term relationship with destination spend on average 5 to 7 nights at their most favorite destination (28.4%). In addition, 21.3% spend on average 8-10 nights; 16% spend 11-14 nights; 15.4% spend 3-4 nights; 13.9% spend there 15 or more nights; 2.5% two nights; 1.7% one night and only 0.8% do not stay overnight.





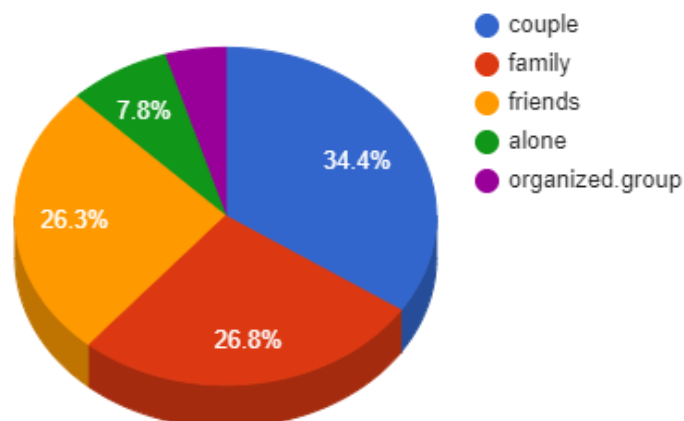
Length of stay



**WAY OF TRAVEL (HOLIDAY GROUP)**

Most of the participants who scored high on long term relationship with destination travel as a couple (34.4%) and with their family (26.8%). 26.3% of them travel with their friends; 7.8% travel alone and 4.7% travel as a part of an organized group.

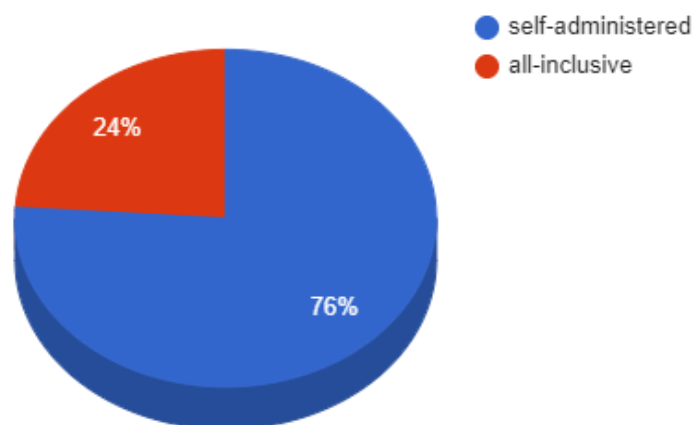
Way of travel



### PREFERABLE TRAVEL PACKAGES

Most of the participants (76%) who scored high on long term relationship with destination prefer self-administered vacations (buy each tourism service separately) and 24% prefer all inclusive packages.

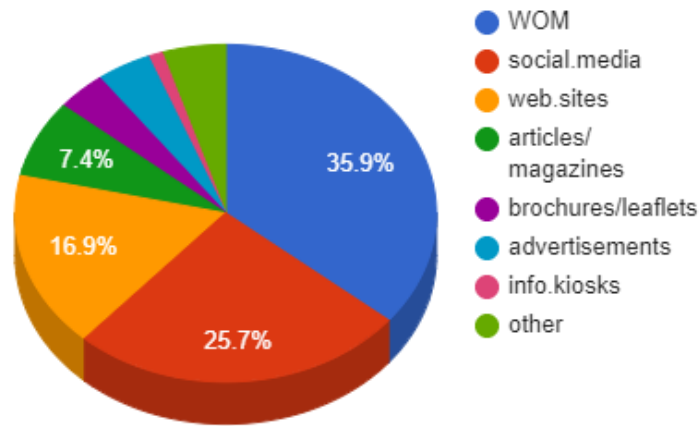
Preferable travel packages



### MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR THAT INFLUENCED TOURISTS' DECISION TO VISIT THEIR MOST FAVORITE DESTINATION

The striking majority of people who scored high on long term relationship with destination were influenced by positive WOM (35.9%) and social media, tripadvisor etc (25.7%). 16.9% of them were influenced by the official web sites of the destination and other web sites, 7.4% by articles in tourism and travel magazines, 4.9% by other (e.g., books, conferences, job, studies, festivals, cruises), 4.2% by advertisements on tv/radio/newspapers/magazines/cinema etc, 3.8% by brochures and leaflets of travel agents, and 1.1% by information Kiosks of the destination's National Tourism Organization.

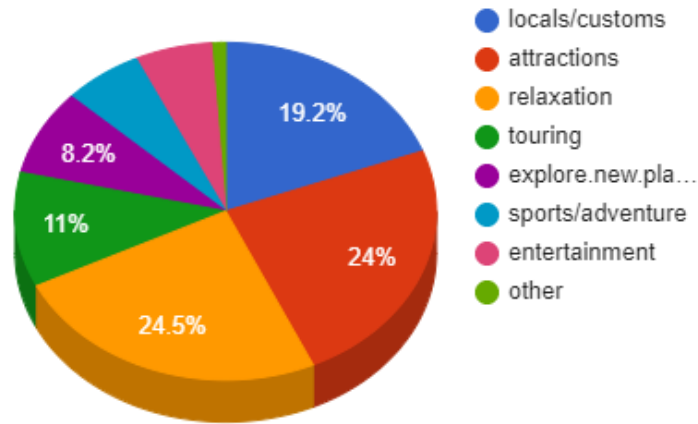
most important factor



#### MOST IMPORTANT ACTIVITIES DURING HOLIDAYS

The striking majority of people who scored high on long term relationship with destination stated that their most important activity during their holidays at their most favorite destination is relaxation (24.5%), visit historical sights or attractions (24%), and get in touch with local people and their culture (19.2%). Moreover, 11% stated that they tour at this destination, 8.2% explore new places/areas there, 6.1% sports/adventure seeking, 5.9% entertainment and 1.1% other (e.g., shopping, events).

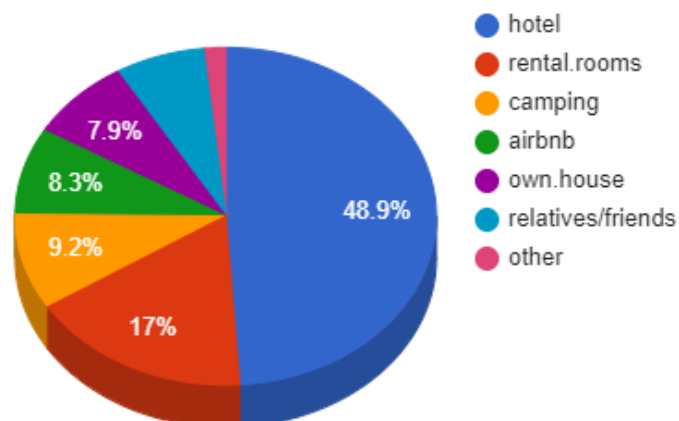
### most important activities



### TYPE OF ACCOMMODATION

The striking majority of people who scored high on long-term relationship with destination prefer staying at hotels (48.9%) and rental rooms (17%). Moreover, 9.2% stated that they prefer camping; 8.3% prefer AirBnB; 7.9% stay at their own house; 6,9% stay at relatives/friends and 1.7% other (cruise ships, backpacking, hostels).

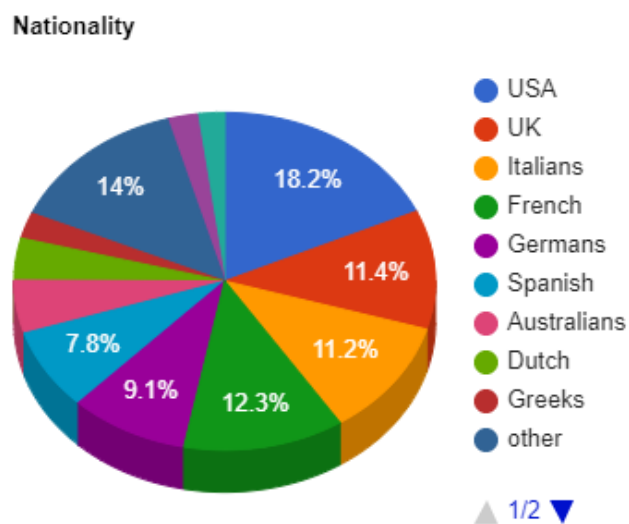
### Type of Accommodation



### 5.3.5.5. SELF-CONFIRMATION

#### NATIONALITY

18.2% of those who scored high on self-confirmation came from the USA; 12.3% were French; 11.4% British; 11.2% Italians; 9.1% Germans; 7.8% Spanish; 5.1% Australians; 4% Dutch; 2.5% Greeks; 2.3% Canadians; and 2.1% Austrians and the rest came from other nationalities.

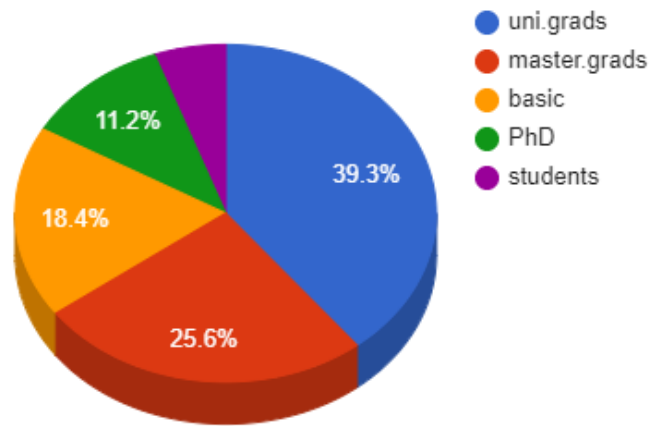


#### EDUCATIONAL LEVEL

39.3% of those who scored high on self-confirmation were university/college graduates; 25.6% master graduates; 18.4% of basic/high school level; 11.2% PhD and 5.5% students.



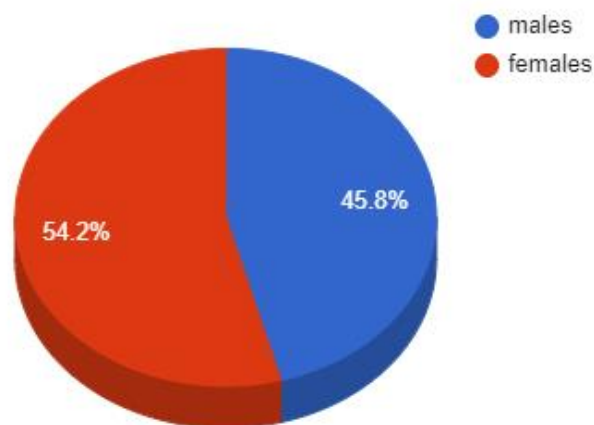
Educational Level



**GENDER**

45.8% of those who scored high on self-confirmation were males and 54.2% females.

Gender

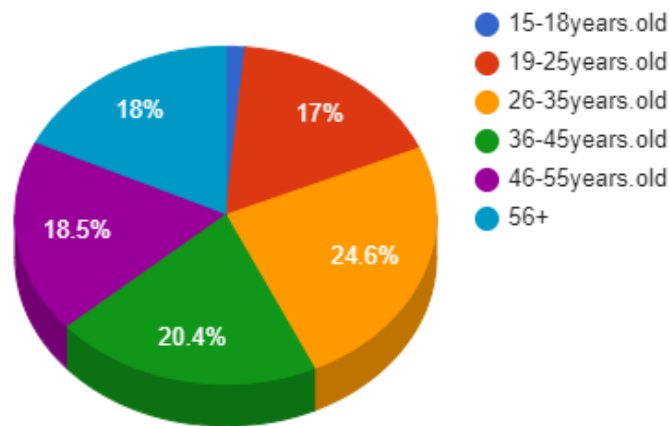




### AGE

24.6% of those who scored high on self-confirmation were 26-35 years old; 20.4% were 36-45 years old; 18.5% were 46-55 years old; 18% were 56 or more years old; 17% were 19-25 years old; and 1.5% were 15-18 years old.

Age

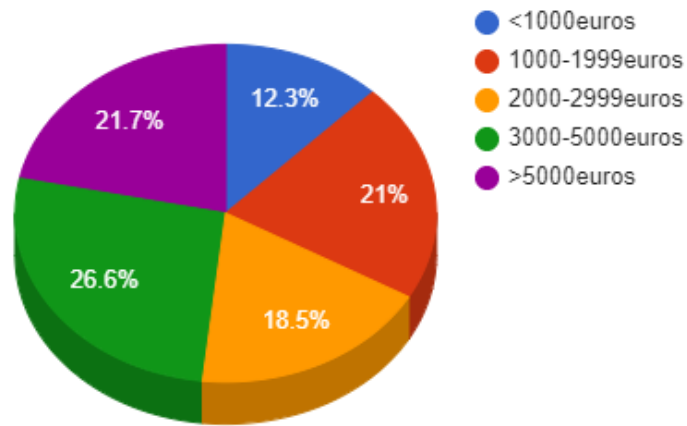


### MONTHLY INCOME

26.6% of those who scored high on self-confirmation earn from 3000 to 5000 euros per month; 21.7% earn more than 5000 euros; 21% earn 1000-1999 euros; 18.5% earn from 2000 to 2999 euros and 12.3% earn under 1000 euros.



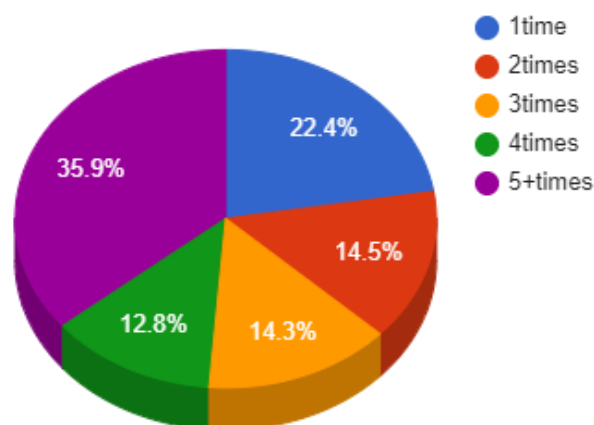
Monthly Income



**TIMES OF VISIT**

Most of those who scored high on self-confirmation have visited it five or more times (35.9%), 22.4% one time, 14.5% two times, 14.3% three times and 12.8% four times.

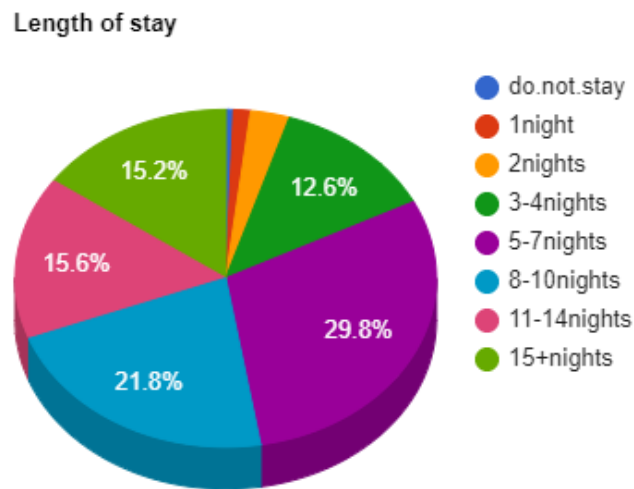
Times of Visit





### LENGTH OF STAY

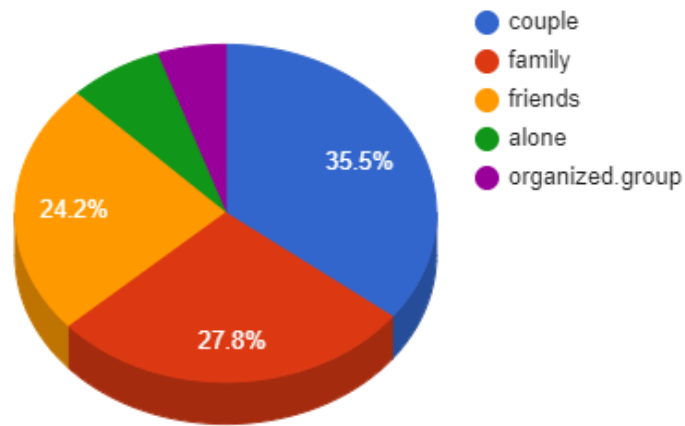
Most of the participants who scored high on self-confirmation spend on average 5 to 7 nights at their most favorite destination (29,8%). Furthermore, 21.8% spend on average 8-10 nights; 15.6% spend 11-14 nights; 15.2% spend there 15 or more nights; 12.6% spend 3-4 nights; 3% two nights; 1.3% one night and only 0.6 % do not stay overnight.



### WAY OF TRAVEL (HOLIDAY GROUP)

Most of the participants who scored high on self-confirmation travel as a couple (35.5%) and with their family (27.8%). 24.2% of them travel with their friends; 7.2% travel alone and 5.3% travel as a part of an organized group.

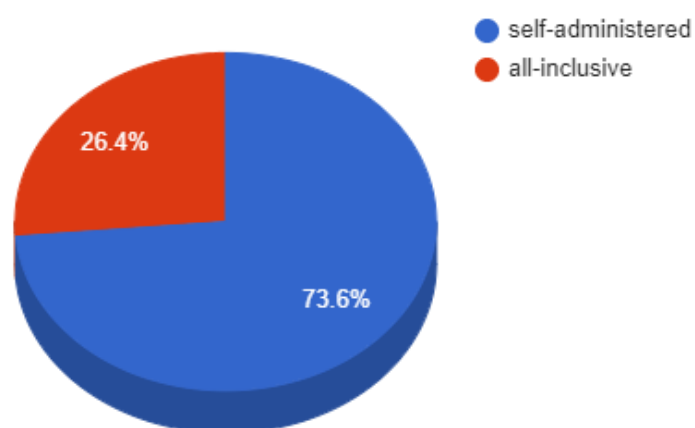
Way of travel



#### PREFERABLE TRAVEL PACKAGES

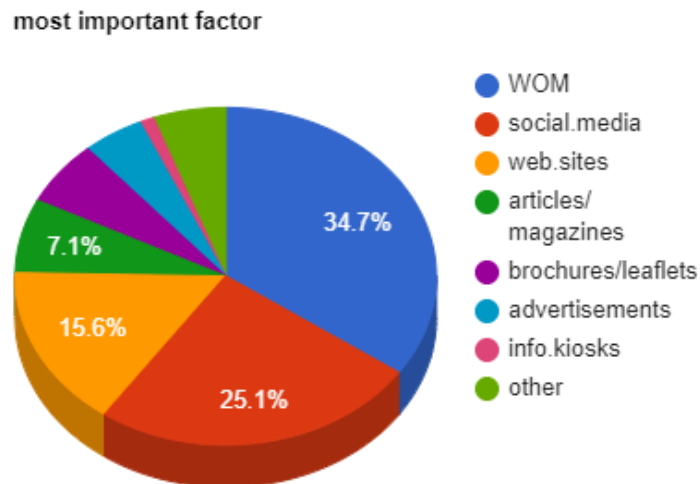
Most of the participants (73.6%) who scored high on self-confirmation prefer self-administered vacations (buy each tourism service separately) and 26.4% prefer all inclusive packages.

Preferable travel packages



**MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR THAT INFLUENCED TOURISTS' DECISION TO VISIT THEIR MOST FAVORITE DESTINATION**

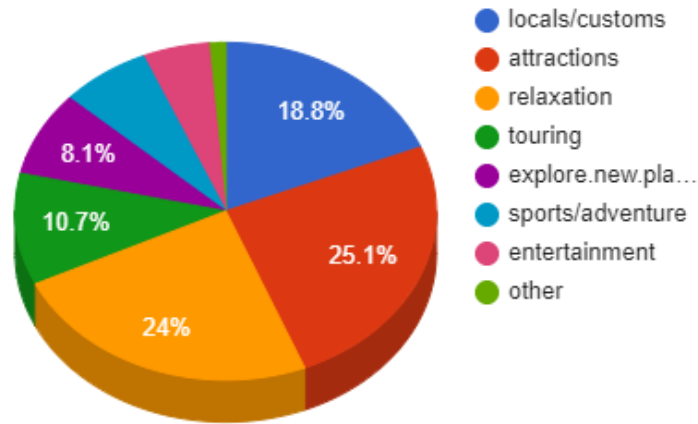
The striking majority of people who scored high on self-confirmation were influenced by positive WOM (34.7%) and social media, tripadvisor etc (25,1%). 15.6% of them were influenced by the official web sites of the destination and other web sites; 7.1% by articles in tourism and travel magazines; 6.2% by brochures and leaflets of travel agents; 5.6% by other (e.g., books, conferences, job, studies, festivals, cruises); 4.7% by advertisements on tv/radio/newspapers/magazines/cinema etc and 1.1% by information Kiosks of the destination's National Tourism Organization.



**MOST IMPORTANT ACTIVITIES DURING HOLIDAYS**

The striking majority of people who scored high on self-confirmation stated that their most important activity during their holidays at their most favorite destination is visiting historical sights or attractions (25.1%), relaxation (24%), and get in touch with local people and their culture (18.8%). Moreover, 10.7% stated that they prefer touring at this destination, 8.1% explore new places/areas there, 6.9% sports/adventure seeking, 5.1% entertainment and 1.3% other (e.g., shopping, events).

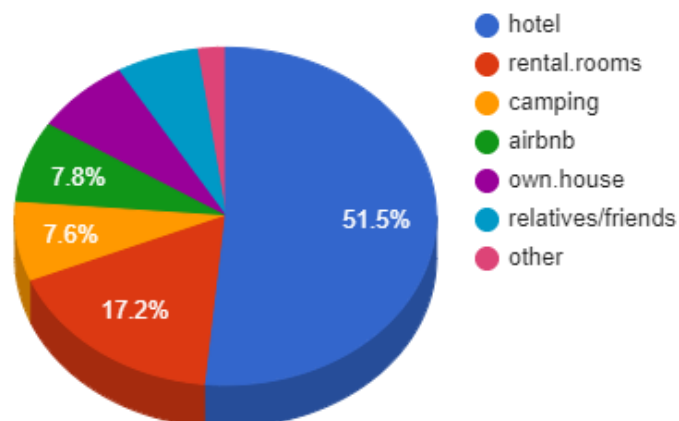
### most important activities



### TYPE OF ACCOMMODATION

The striking majority of people who scored high on self-confirmation prefer staying at hotels (51.5%) and rental rooms (17.2%). Moreover, 7.8% prefer AirBnB; 7.6% stated that they prefer camping; 7.4% stay at their own house, 6.3% stay at relatives/friends and 2.2% other (cruise ships, backpacking, hostels).

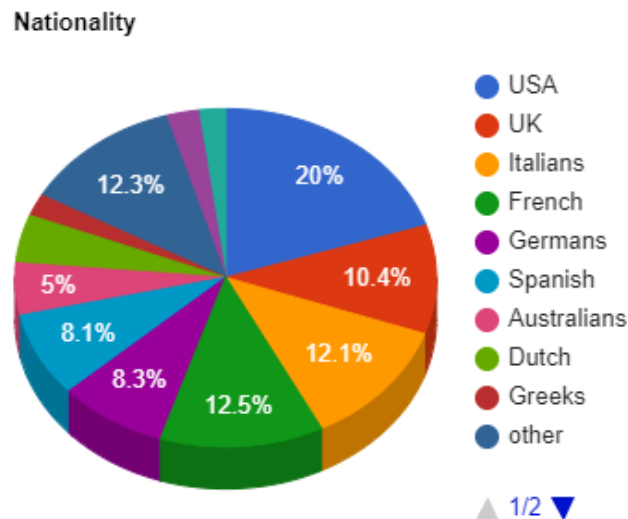
### Type of Accommodation



### 5.3.5.6. SELF-TRANSFORMATION

#### NATIONALITY

20% of those who scored high on self-transformation came from the USA; 12,5% were French; 12.1% Italians; 10.4% British; 8.3% Germans; 8.1% Spanish; 5% Australians; 4.6% Dutch; 2.5% Canadians; 2.1% Greeks; 2.1% Austrians and 12.3% from other countries

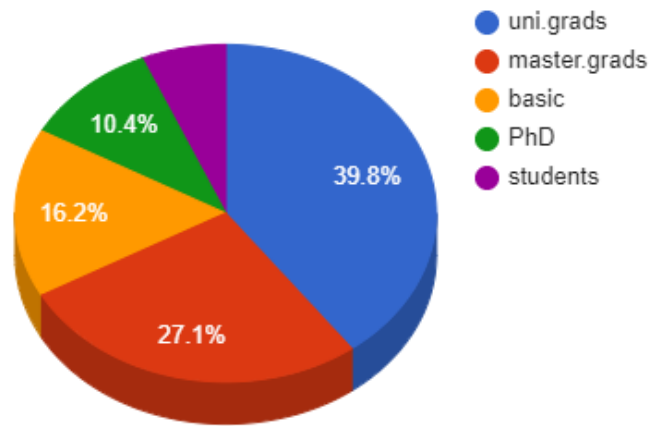


#### EDUCATIONAL LEVEL

39.8% of those who scored high on self-transformation were university/college graduates; 27.1% master graduates; 16.2% basic/high school level; 10.4% PhD and 6.5% students.



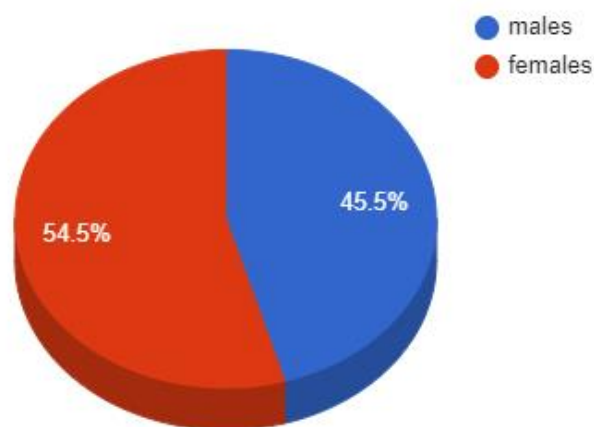
Educational Level



GENDER

45.5% of those who scored high on self-transformation were males and 54.5% females

Gender

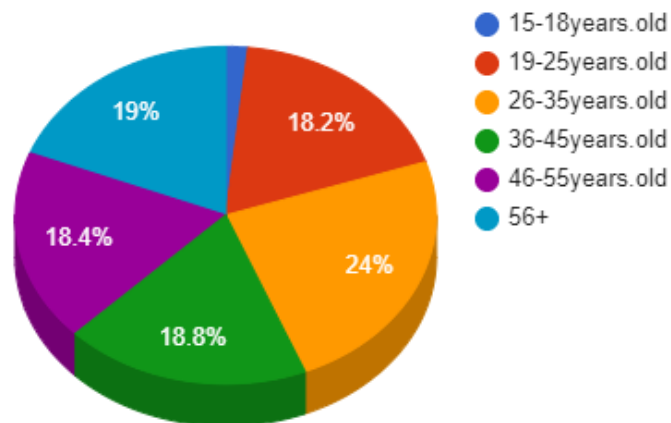




### AGE

24% of those who scored high on self-transformation were 26-35 years old; 19% were 56 or more years old; 18.8% were 36-45 years old; 18.4% were 46-55 years old; 18.2% were 19-25 years old; and 1.7% were 15-18 years old.

Age

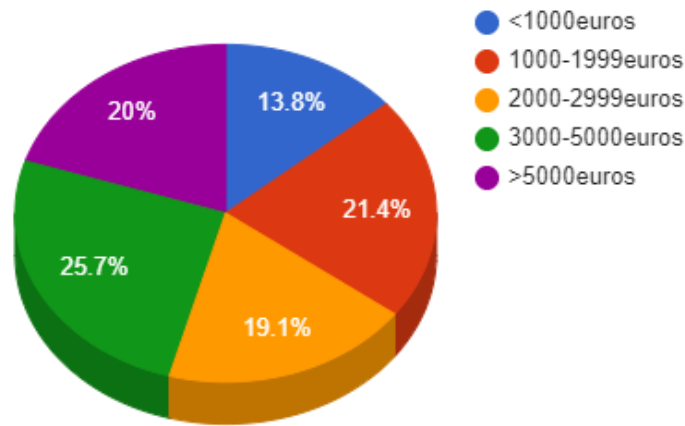


### MONTHLY INCOME

25.7% of those who scored high on self-transformation earn from 3000 to 5000 euros per month; 21.4% earn 1000-1999 euros; 20% earn more than 5000 euros; 19.1% earn from 2000 to 2999 euros and 13.8% earn under 1000 euros.



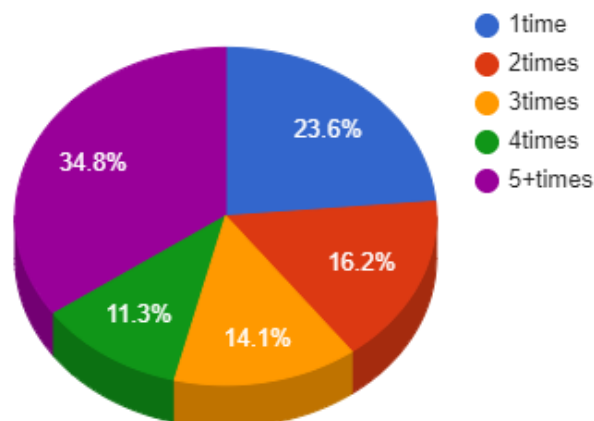
Monthly Income



#### TIMES OF VISIT

Most of those who scored high on self-transformation have visited it five or more times (34.8%), 23.6% one time, 16.2% two times, 14.1% three times and 11.3% four times.

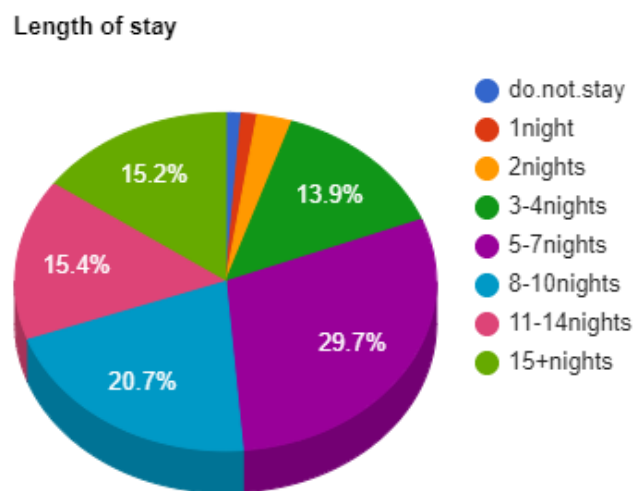
Times of Visit





### LENGTH OF STAY

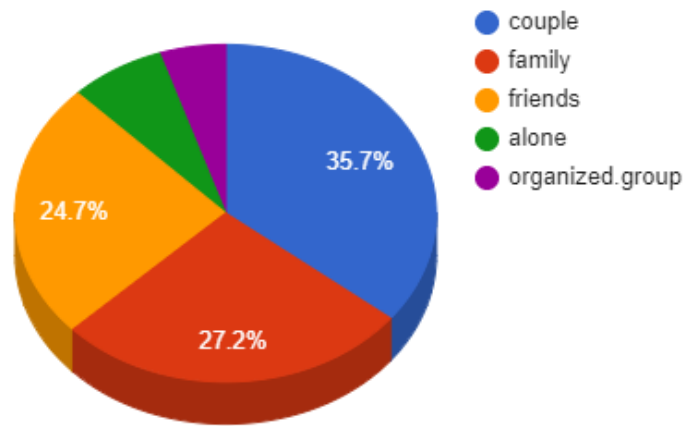
Most of the participants who scored high on self-transformation spend on average 5 to 7 nights at their most favorite destination (29.7%). Furthermore, 20.7% spend on average 8-10 nights; 15.4% spend 11-14 nights; 15.2% spend there 15 or more nights; 13.9% spend 3-4 nights; 2.7% two nights; 1.2% one night and only 1.2 % do not stay overnight.



### WAY OF TRAVEL (HOLIDAY GROUP)

Most of the participants who scored high on self-transformation travel as a couple (35.7%) and with their family (27.2%). 24.7% of them travel with their friends; 7.3% travel alone and 5.1% travel as a part of an organized group.

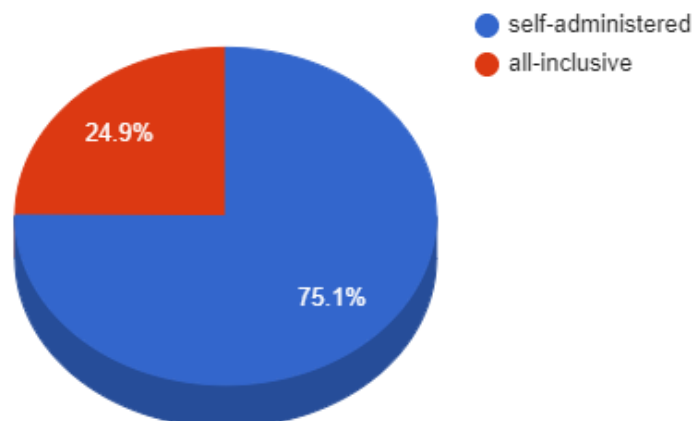
Way of travel



#### PREFERABLE TRAVEL PACKAGES

Most of the participants (75.1%) who scored high on self-transformation prefer self-administered vacations (buy each tourism service separately) and 24.9% prefer all inclusive packages.

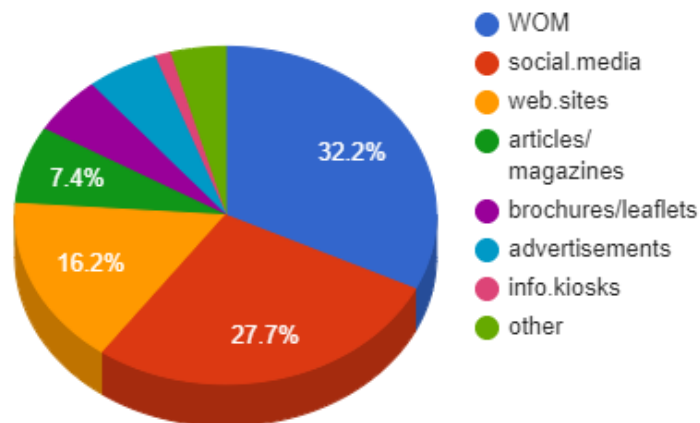
Preferable travel packages



### **MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR THAT INFLUENCED TOURISTS' DECISION TO VISIT THEIR MOST FAVORITE DESTINATION**

The striking majority of people who scored high on self-transformation were influenced by positive WOM (32.2%) and social media, tripadvisor etc (27.7%). 16.2% of them were influenced by the official web sites of the destination and other web sites, 7.4% by articles in tourism and travel magazines, 5.5% by advertisements on tv/radio/newspapers/magazines/cinema etc, 5.5% by brochures and leaflets of travel agents, 4.3% by other (e.g., books, conferences, job, studies, festivals, cruises), and 1.2% by information Kiosks of the destination's National Tourism Organization.

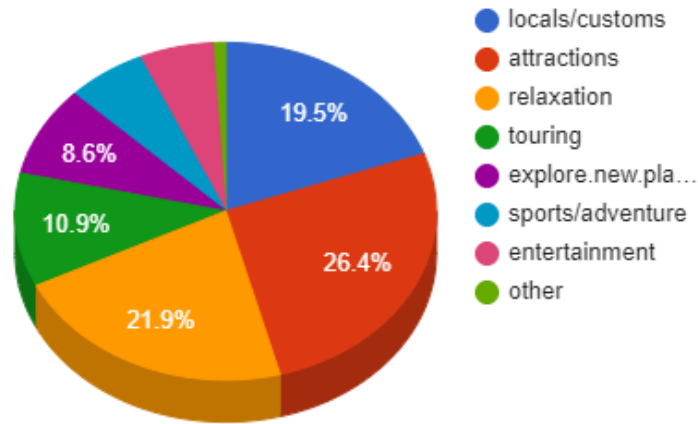
most important factor



### **MOST IMPORTANT ACTIVITIES DURING HOLIDAYS**

The striking majority of people who scored high on self-transformation stated that their most important activity during their holidays at their most favorite destination is visiting historical sights or attractions (26.4%), relaxation (21.9%), and get in touch with local people and their culture (19.5%). Moreover, 10.9% stated that they tour at this destination, 8.6% explore new places/areas there, 6.1% sports/adventure seeking, 5.7% entertainment and 1% other (e.g., shopping, events).

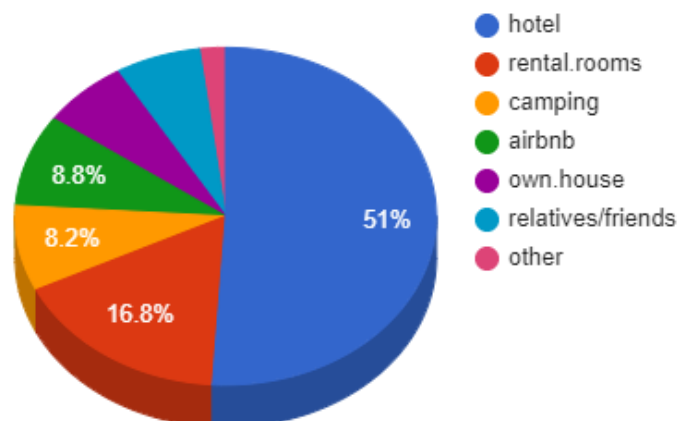
### most important activities



### TYPE OF ACCOMMODATION

The striking majority of people who scored high on self-transformation prefer staying at hotels (51%) and rental rooms (16.8%). Moreover, 8.8% prefer AirBnB; 8.2% stated that they prefer camping; 6.6% stay at their own house, 6.6% stay at relatives/friends and 2% other (cruise ships, backpacking, hostels).

### Type of Accommodation

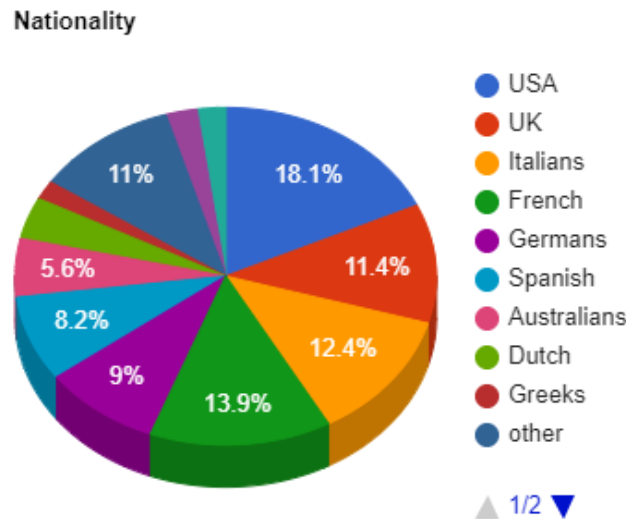




### 5.3.5.7. WELL-BEING

#### NATIONALITY

18.1% of those who scored high on well-being came from the USA; 13.9% were French; 12.4% Italians; 11.4% British; 9% Germans; 8.2% Spanish; 5.6% Australians; 4% Dutch; 2.4% Canadians; 2.2% Austrians; 1.8% Greeks and 11% from other countries.

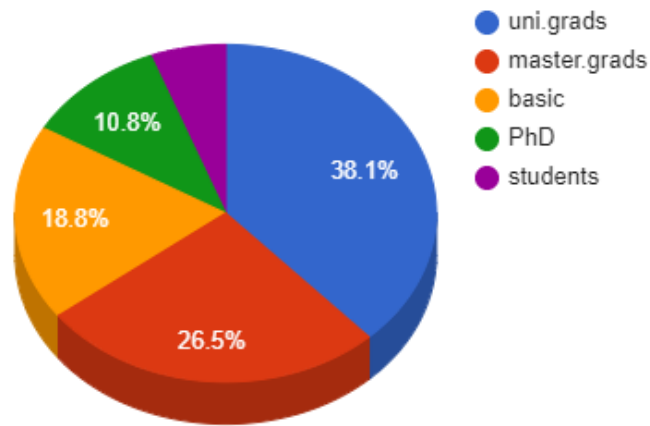


#### EDUCATIONAL LEVEL

38.1% of those who scored high on well-being were university/college graduates; 26.5% master graduates; 18.8% basic/high school level; 10.8% PhD and 5.8% students.



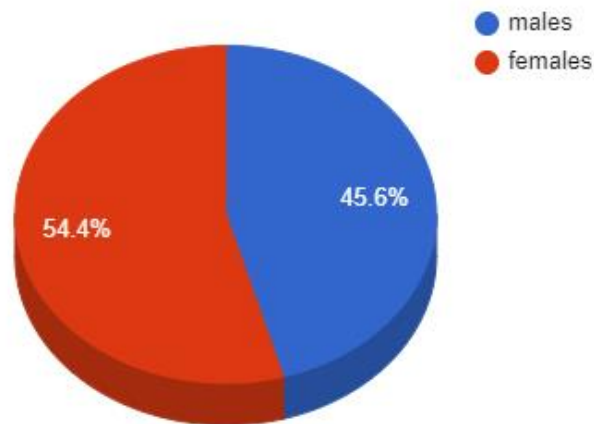
Educational Level



**GENDER**

45.6% of those who scored high on well-being were males and 54.4% females.

Gender

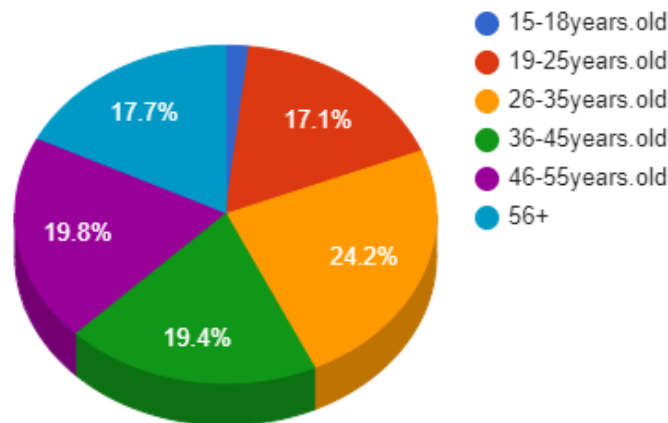




### AGE

24.2% of those who scored high on well-being were 26-35 years old; 19.8% were 46-55 years old; 19.4% were 36-45 years old; 17.7% were 56 or more years old; 17.1% were 19-25 years old; and 1.8% were 15-18 years old.

Age

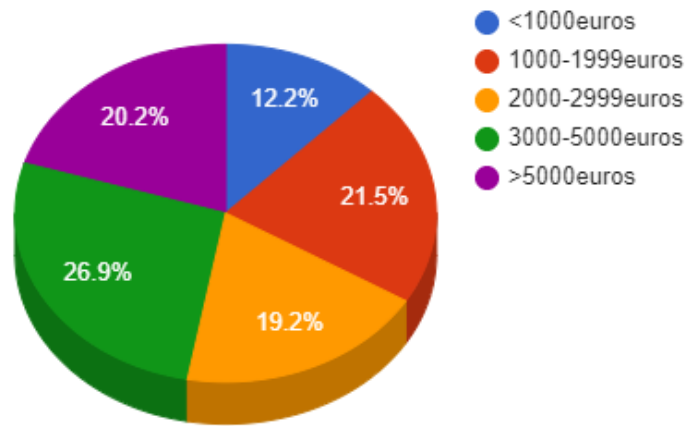


### MONTHLY INCOME

26.9% of those who scored high on well-being earn from 3000 to 5000 euros per month; 21.5% earn 1000-1999 euros; 20.2% earn more than 5000 euros; 19.2% earn from 2000 to 2999 euros and 12.2% earn under 1000 euros.



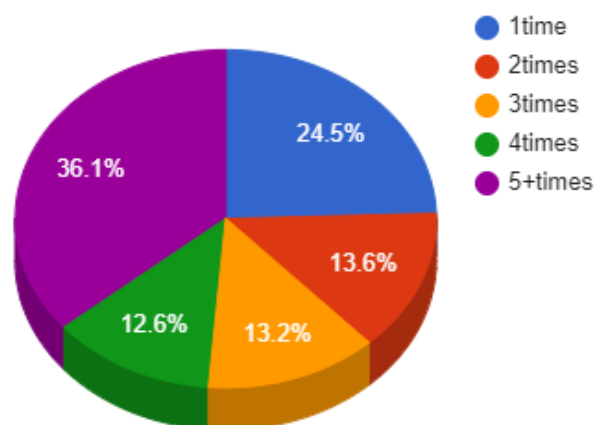
Monthly Income



**TIMES OF VISIT**

Most of those who scored high on well-being have visited it five or more times (36.1%); 24.5% one time, 13.6% two times; 13.2% three times and 12.6% four times.

Times of Visit

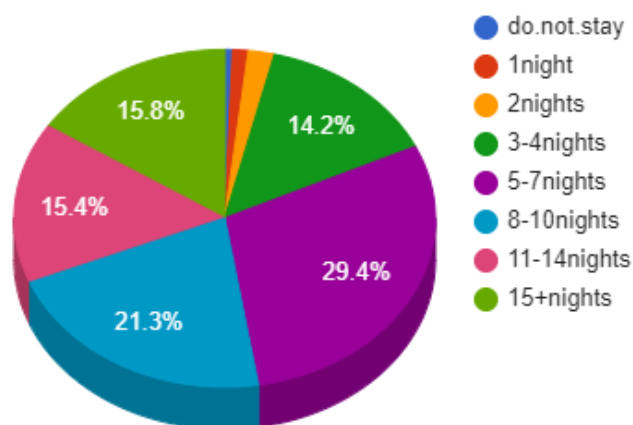




### LENGTH OF STAY

Most of the participants who scored high on well-being spend on average 5 to 7 nights at their most favorite destination (29.4%). Furthermore, 21.3% spend on average 8-10 nights; 15.8% spend there 15 or more nights; 15.4% spend 11-14 nights; 14.2% spend 3-4 nights; 2% two nights; 1.2% one night and only 0.6 % do not stay overnight.

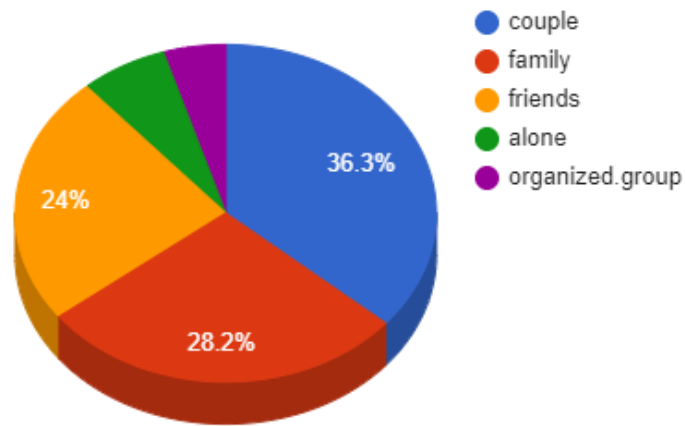
Length of stay



### WAY OF TRAVEL (HOLIDAY GROUP)

Most of the participants who scored high on well-being travel as a couple (36.3%) and with their family (28.2%). 24% of them travel with their friends; 6.7% travel alone and 4.8% travel as a part of an organized group.

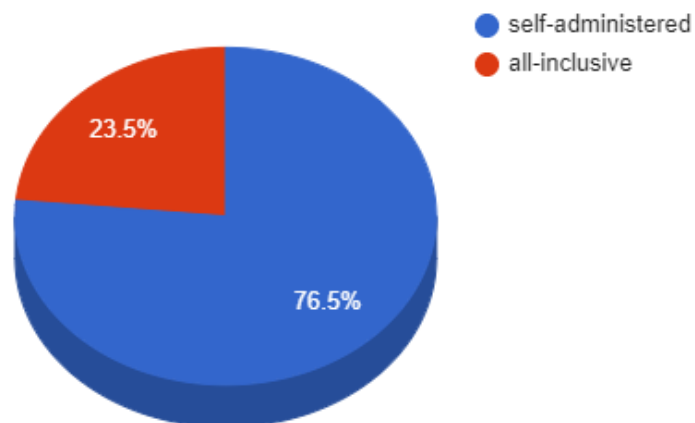
Way of travel



#### PREFERABLE TRAVEL PACKAGES

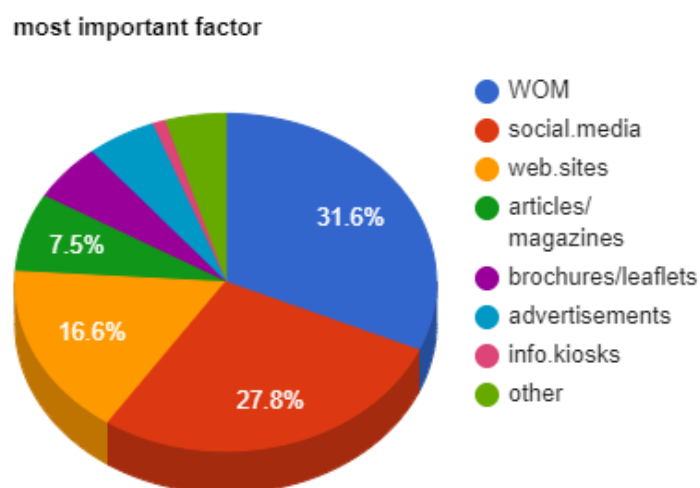
Most of the participants (76.5%) who scored high on well-being prefer self-administered vacations (buy each tourism service separately) and 23.5% prefer all inclusive packages.

Preferable travel packages



### MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR THAT INFLUENCED TOURISTS' DECISION TO VISIT THEIR MOST FAVORITE DESTINATION

The striking majority of people who scored high on well-being were influenced by positive WOM from relatives/friends (31.6%) and social media, tripadvisor etc (27.8%). 16.6% of them were influenced by the official web sites of the destination and other web sites; 7.5% by articles in tourism and travel magazines; 5.5% by brochures and leaflets of travel agents; 5.3% by advertisements on tv/radio/newspapers/magazines/cinema etc; 4.7% by other (e.g., books, conferences, job, studies, festivals, cruises); and 1% by information Kiosks of the destination's National Tourism Organization.



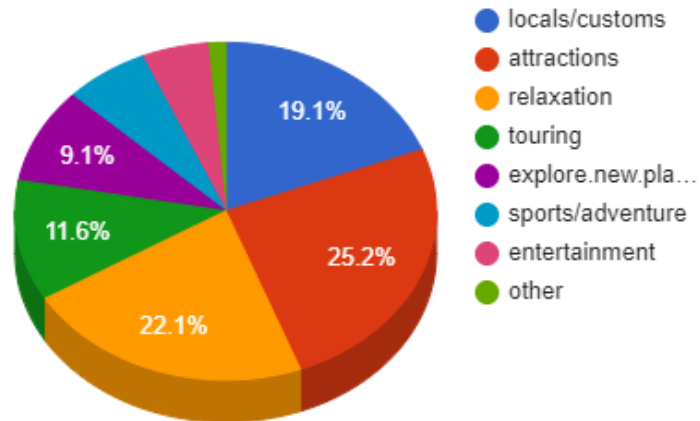
### MOST IMPORTANT ACTIVITIES DURING HOLIDAYS

The striking majority of people who scored high on well-being stated that their most important activity during their holidays at their most favorite destination is visiting historical sights or attractions (25.2%), relaxation (22.1%), and get in touch with local people and their culture (19.1%). Moreover, 11.6% stated that they prefer touring at



this destination, 9.1% explore new places/areas there, 6.5% sports/adventure seeking, 5.1% entertainment and 1.4% other (e.g., shopping, events).

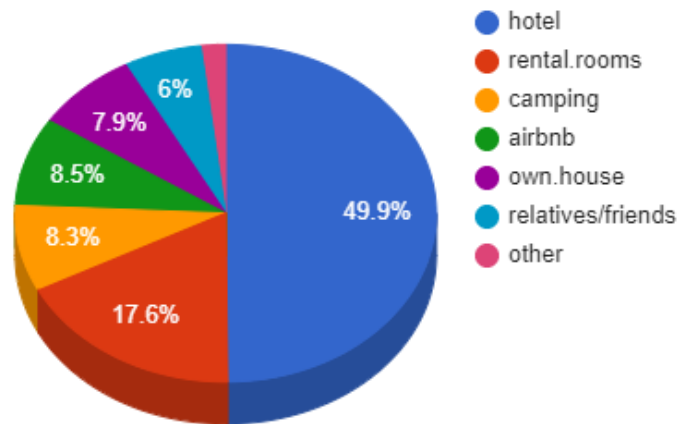
most important activities



#### TYPE OF ACCOMMODATION

The striking majority of people who scored high on well-being prefer staying at hotels (49.9%) and rental rooms (17.6%). Moreover, 8.5% prefer AirBnB; 8.3% stated that they prefer camping; 7.9% stay at their own house, 6% stay at relatives/friends and 1.9% other (cruise ships, backpacking, hostels).

Type of Accommodation



#### 5.3.5.8. POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGICAL STATES

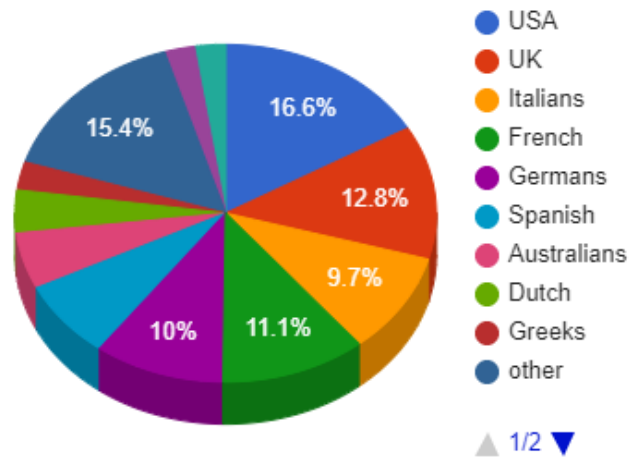
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##### NATIONALITY

16.6% of those who scored high on positive psychological states came from the USA; 12.8% British; 11.1% were French; 10% Germans; 9.7% Italians; 7,5% Spanish; 5,4% Australians; 4.1% Dutch; 2.7% Greeks; 2.4% Austrians and 2.3% Canadians. All the remaining (15.4%) came from other countries.



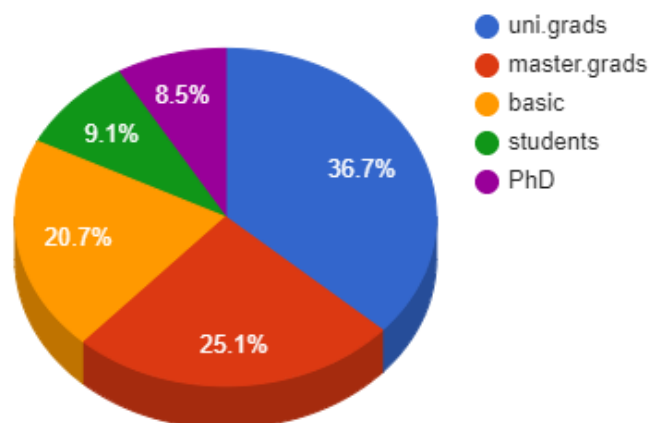
Nationality



EDUCATIONAL LEVEL

36.7% of those who scored high on positive psychological states were university/college graduates; 25.1% master graduates; 20.7% basic/high school level; 9.1% students and 8.5% PhD.

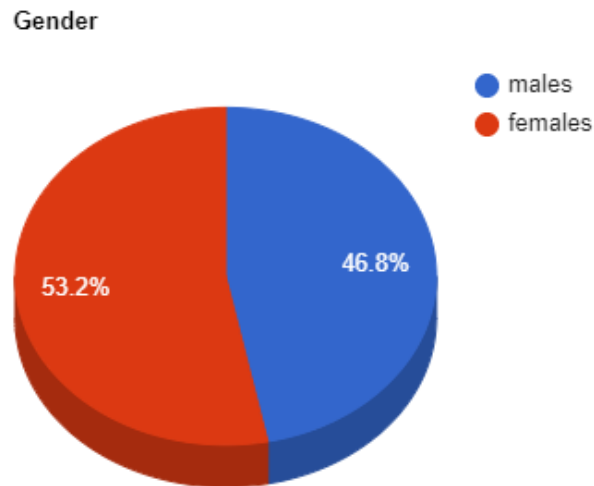
Educational Level





### GENDER

46.8% of those who scored high on positive psychological states were males and 53.2% females.

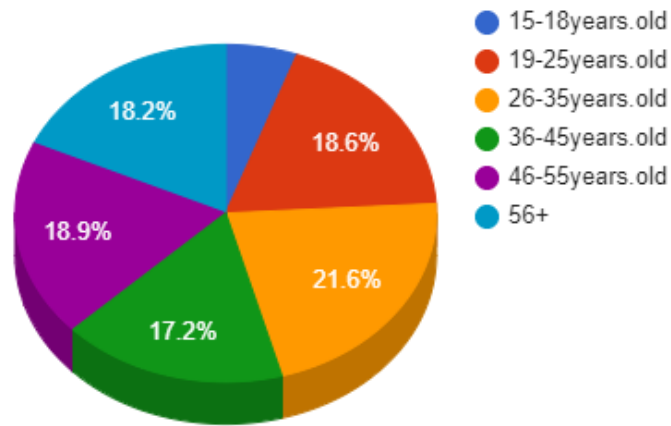


### AGE

21.6% of those who scored high on positive psychological states were 26-35 years old; 18.9% were 46-55 years old; 18.6% were 19-25 years old; 18.2% were 56 or more years old; 17.2% were 36-45 years old; and 5.5% were 15-18 years old.



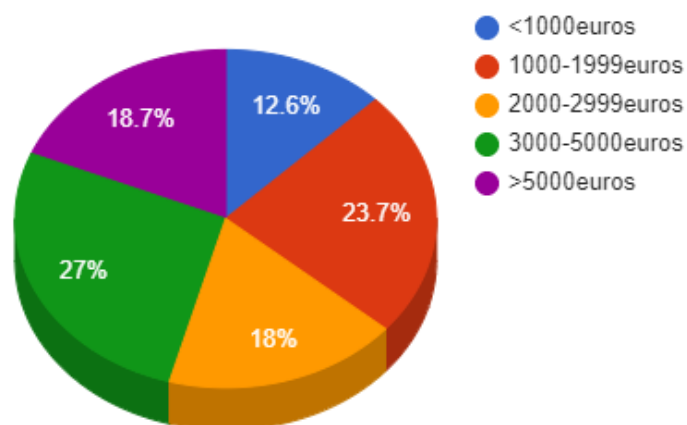
Age



#### MONTHLY INCOME

27% of those who scored high on positive psychological states earn from 3000 to 5000 euros per month; 23.7% earn 1000-1999 euros; 18.7% earn more than 5000 euros; 18% earn from 2000 to 2999 euros and 12.6% earn under 1000 euros.

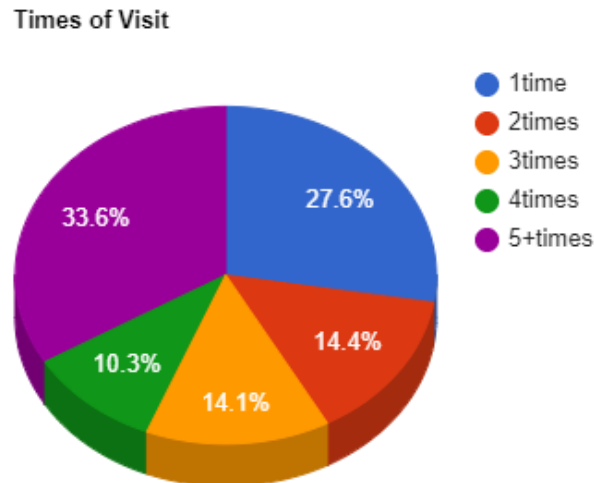
Monthly Income





### TIMES OF VISIT

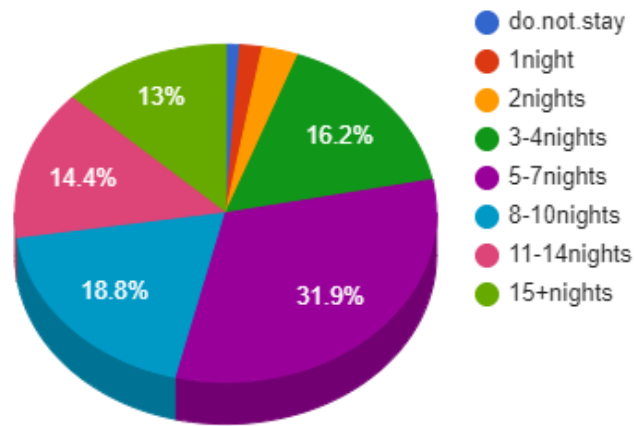
Most of those who scored high on positive psychological states have visited it five or more times (33.6%); 27.6% one time, 14.4% two times; 14.1% three times and 10.3% four times.



### LENGTH OF STAY

Most of the participants who scored high on positive psychological states spend on average 5 to 7 nights at their most favorite destination (31.9%). Furthermore, 18.8% spend on average 8-10 nights; 16.2% spend 3-4 nights; 14.4% spend 11-14 nights; 13% spend there 15 or more nights; 2.8% two nights; 1.7% one night and only 1.1 % do not stay overnight.

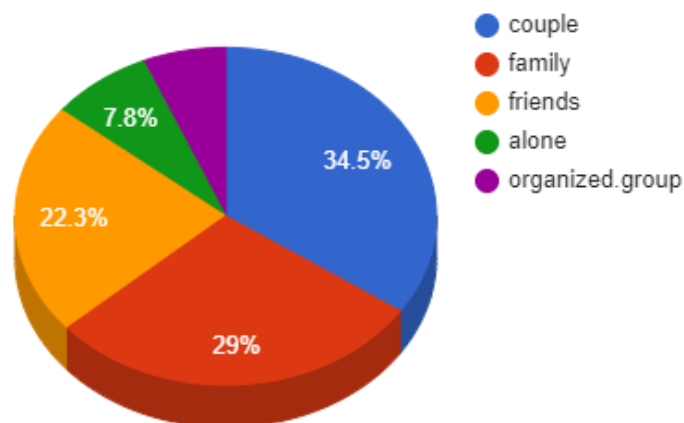
Length of stay



#### WAY OF TRAVEL (HOLIDAY GROUP)

Most of the participants who scored high on positive psychological states travel as a couple (34.5%) and with their family (29%). 22.3% of them travel with their friends; 7.8% travel alone and 6.4% travel as a part of an organized group.

Way of travel





### PREFERABLE TRAVEL PACKAGES

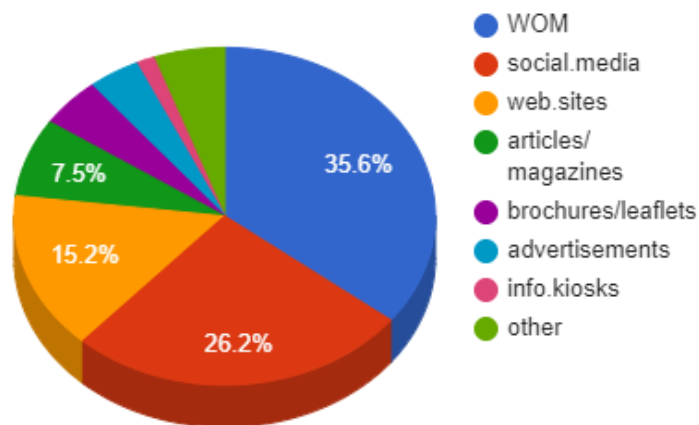
Most of the participants (69.9%) who scored high on positive psychological states prefer self-administered vacations (buy each tourism service separately) and 30.1% prefer all inclusive packages.



### MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR THAT INFLUENCED TOURISTS' DECISION TO VISIT THEIR MOST FAVORITE DESTINATION

The striking majority of people who scored high on positive psychological states were influenced by positive WOM from relatives/friends (35.6%) and social media, tripadvisor etc (26.2%). 15.2% of them were influenced by the official web sites of the destination and other web sites; 7.5% by articles in tourism and travel magazines; 5.5% by other (e.g., books, conferences, job, studies, festivals, cruises); 4.7% by brochures and leaflets of travel agents; 4% by advertisements on tv/radio/newspapers/magazines/cinema etc; and 1.4% by information Kiosks of the destination's National Tourism Organization.

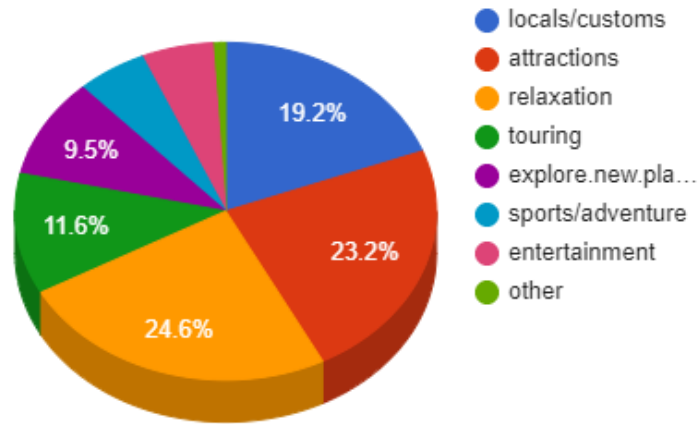
most important factor



#### MOST IMPORTANT ACTIVITIES DURING HOLIDAYS

The striking majority of people who scored high on positive psychological states claimed that their most important activity during their holidays at their most favorite destination is relaxation (24.6%); visiting cultural sights or attractions of the destination (23.2%), and get in touch with local people and their culture/customs (19.2%). Moreover, 11.6% stated that they prefer touring at this destination; 9.5% explore new places/areas there; 5.5% entertainment; 5.4% sports/adventure seeking, and 1% other activities (e.g., shopping, events).

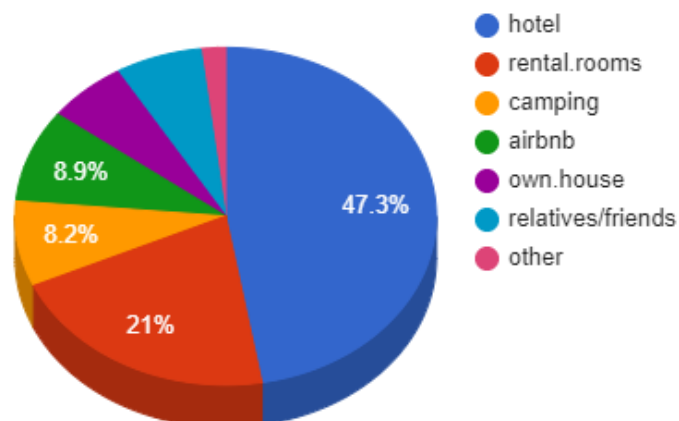
### most important activities



### TYPE OF ACCOMMODATION

The striking majority of people who scored high on positive psychological states prefer staying at hotels (47.3%) and rental rooms (21%). Moreover, 8.9% prefer AirBnB; 8.2% stated that they prefer camping; 6.7% stay at relatives/friends; 6.1% stay at their own house and 1.9% other (cruise ships, backpacking, hostels).

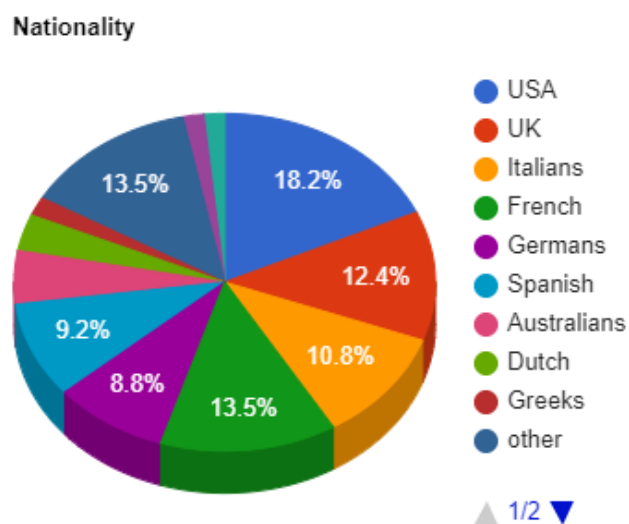
### Type of Accommodation



### 5.3.5.9. EMOTIONAL ATTACHMENT

#### NATIONALITY

18.2% of those who scored high on emotional attachment with destination came from the USA; 13.5% were French; 12.4% British; 10.8% Italians; 9.2% Spanish; 8.8% Germans; 5.1% Australians; 3.5% Dutch; 1.8% Greeks; 1.6% Austrians and 1.6% Canadians. All the remaining (13.5%) came from other nationalities.

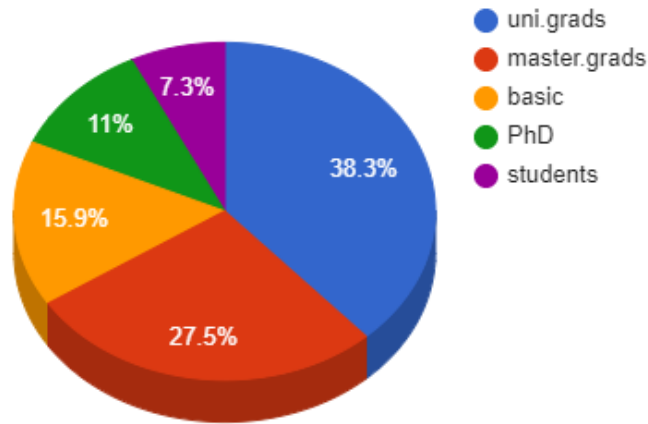


#### EDUCATIONAL LEVEL

38.3% of those who scored high on emotional attachment with destination were university/college graduates; 27.5% master graduates; 15.9% of basic/high school level; 11% PhD ; and 7.3% students.



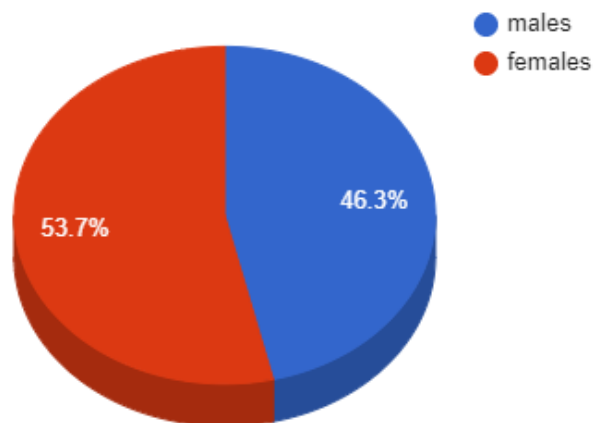
Educational Level



GENDER

46.3% of those who scored high on emotional attachment with destination were males and 53.7% females.

Gender

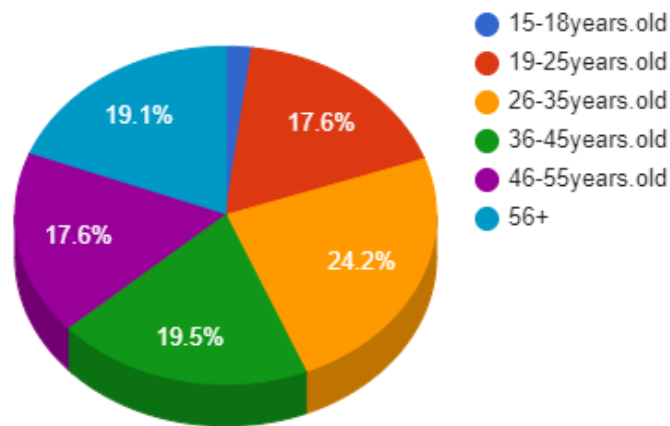




### AGE

24.2% of those who scored high on emotional attachment with destination were 26-35 years old; 19.5% were 36-45 years old; 19.1% were 56 or more years old; 17.6% were 46-55 years old; 17.6% were 19-25 years old; and 2% were 15-18 years old.

Age



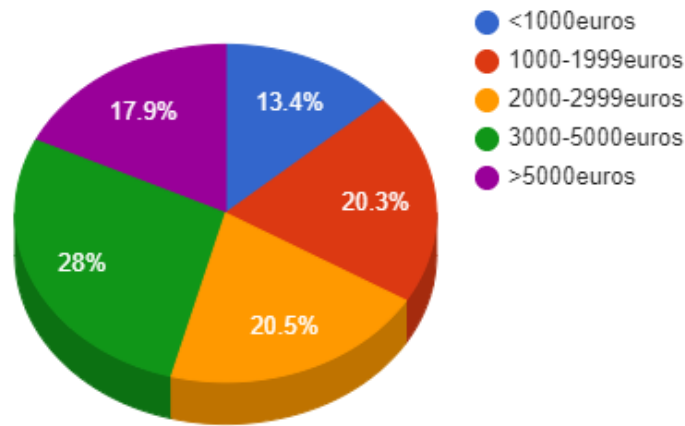
### MONTHLY INCOME

28% of those who scored high on emotional attachment with destination earn from 3000 to 5000 euros per month; 20.5% earn from 2000 to 2999 euros; 20.3% earn 1000-1999 euros; 17.9% earn more than 5000 euros and 13.4% earn under 1000 euros.





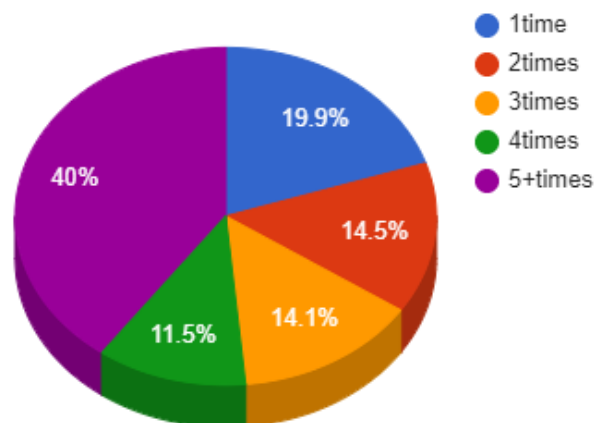
Monthly Income



#### TIMES OF VISIT

Most of those who scored high on emotional attachment with destination have visited it five or more times (40%); 19.9% one time, 14.5% two times; 14.1% three times and 11.5% four times.

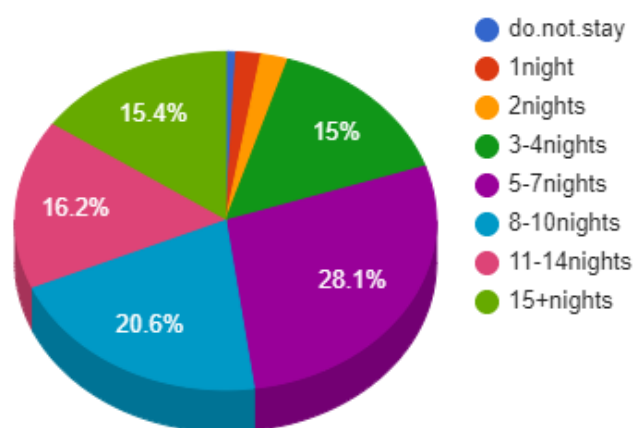
Times of Visit



### LENGTH OF STAY

Most of the participants who scored high on emotional attachment with destination spend on average 5 to 7 nights at their most favorite destination (28.1%). Furthermore, 20.6% spend on average 8-10 nights; 16.2% spend 11-14 nights; 15.4% spend there 15 or more nights; 15% spend 3-4 nights; 2.1% two nights; 1.9% one night and only 0.8 % do not stay overnight.

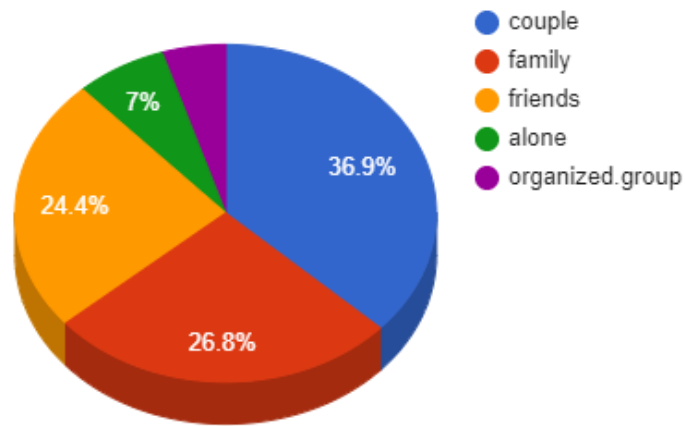
Length of stay



### WAY OF TRAVEL (HOLIDAY GROUP)

Most of the participants who scored high on emotional attachment with destination travel as a couple (36.9%) and with their family (26.8%). 24.4% of them travel with their friends; 7% travel alone and 4.9% travel as a part of an organized group.

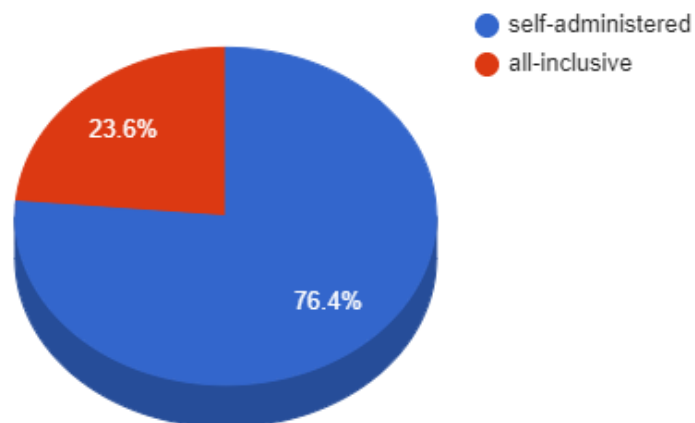
Way of travel



#### PREFERABLE TRAVEL PACKAGES

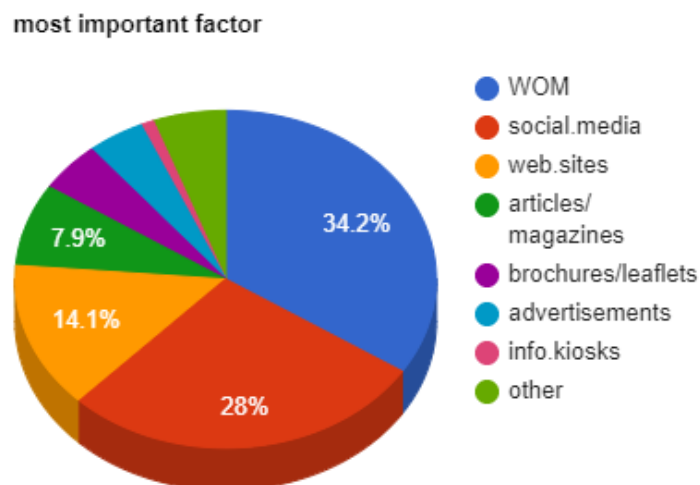
Most of the participants (76.4%) who scored high on emotional attachment with destination prefer self-administered vacations (buy each tourism service separately) and 23.6% prefer all inclusive packages.

Preferable travel packages



**MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR THAT INFLUENCED TOURISTS' DECISION TO VISIT THEIR MOST FAVORITE DESTINATION**

The striking majority of people who scored high on emotional attachment with destination were influenced by positive WOM from relatives/friends/acquaintances (34.2%) and social media, tripadvisor etc (28%). 14.1% of them were influenced by the official web sites of the destination and other web sites; 7.9% by articles in tourism and travel magazines; 5.6% by other (e.g., books, conferences, job, studies, festivals, cruises); 4.8% by advertisements on tv/radio/newspapers/magazines/cinema etc; 4.4% by brochures and leaflets of travel agents; and 1% by information Kiosks of the destination's National Tourism Organization.



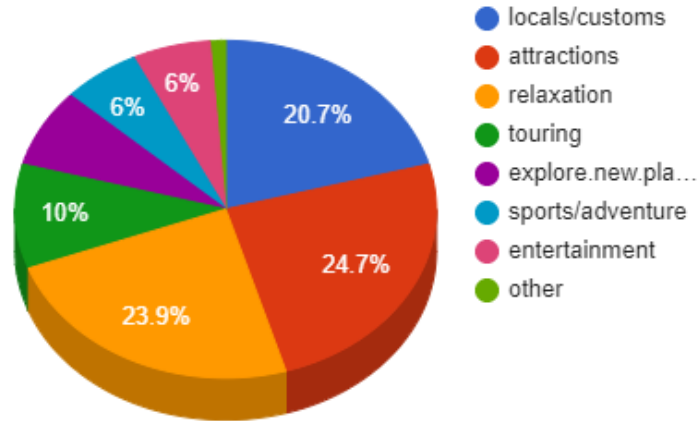
**MOST IMPORTANT ACTIVITIES DURING HOLIDAYS**

The striking majority of people who scored high on emotional attachment with destination claimed that their most important activity during their holidays at their most favorite destination is visiting cultural sights or attractions of the destination (24.7%), relaxation (23.9%); and get in touch with local people and their culture (20.7%). Moreover, 10% stated that they prefer touring at this destination; 7.5% explore new



places/areas there; 6% entertainment; 6% sports/adventure seeking, and 1.2% other activities (e.g., shopping, events).

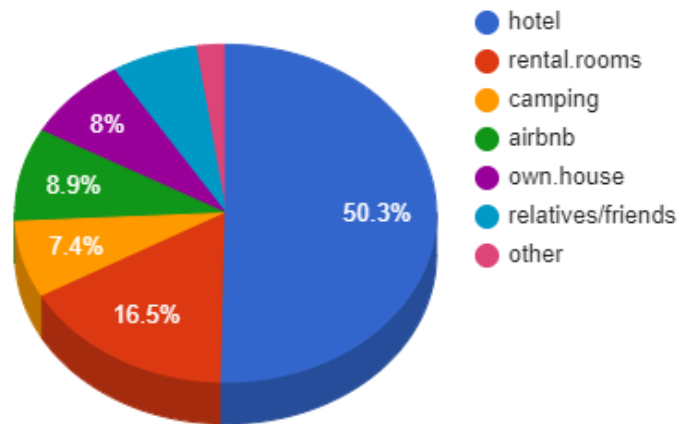
most important activities



#### TYPE OF ACCOMMODATION

The striking majority of people who scored high on emotional attachment with destination prefer staying at hotels (50.3%) and rental rooms (16.5%). Moreover, 8.9% prefer AirBnB; 8% stay at their own house; 7.4% prefer camping; 6.6% stay at relatives/friends; and 2.3% other (cruise ships, backpacking, hostels).

Type of Accommodation



#### 5.3.5.10. INTUITIVE/NATURAL FIT

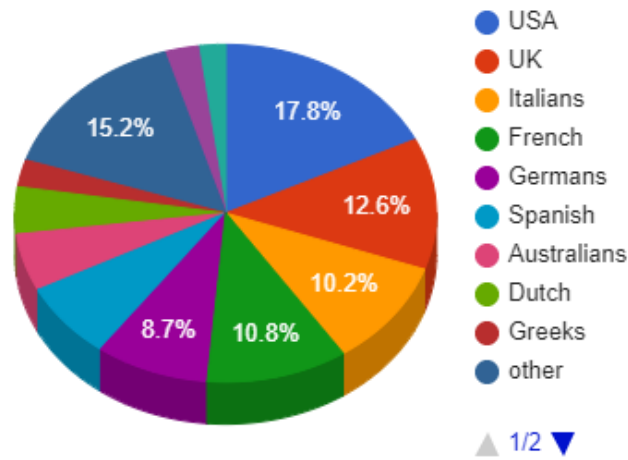
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##### NATIONALITY

17.8% of those who scored high on intuitive fit came from the USA; 12.6% British; 10.8% were French; 10.2% Italians; 8.7% Germans; 7.4% Spanish; 5.5% Australians; 4.5% Dutch; 2.6% Greeks; 2.6% Canadians; and 2.1% Austrians. All the remaining (15.2%) came from other nationalities.



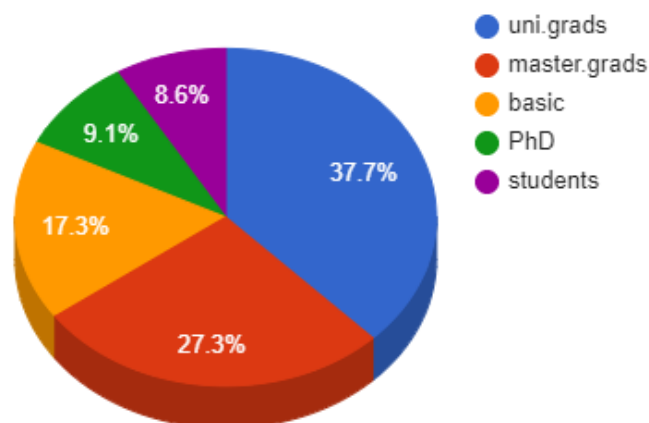
Nationality



EDUCATIONAL LEVEL

37.7% of those who scored high on intuitive fit were university/college graduates; 27.3% master graduates; 17.3% basic/high school level; 9.1% PhD and 8.6% students.

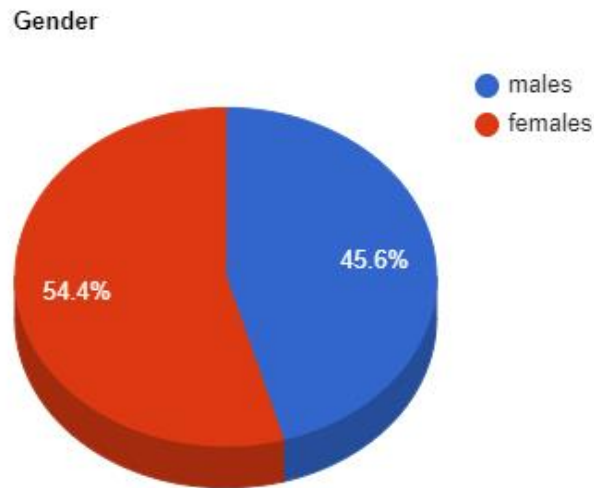
Educational Level





### GENDER

45.6% of those who scored high on intuitive fit were males and 54.4% females.



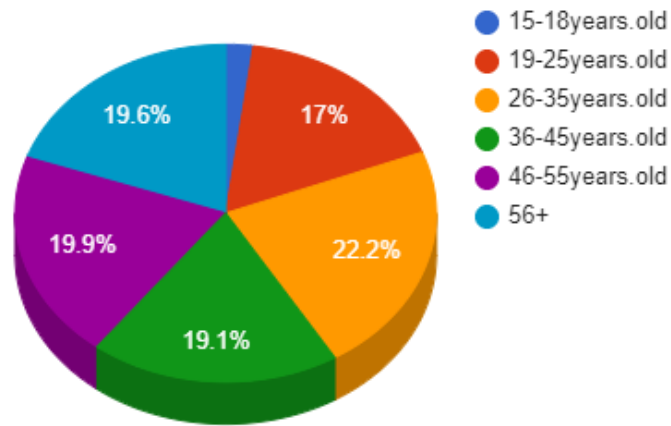
### AGE

22.2% of those who scored high on intuitive fit were 26-35 years old; 19.9% were 46-55 years old; 19.6% were 56 or more years old; 19.1% were 36-45 years old; 17% were 19-25 years old and 2.1% were 15-18 years old.





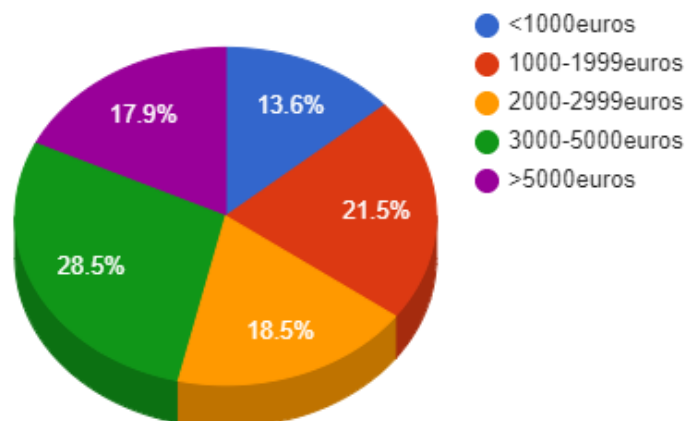
Age



#### MONTHLY INCOME

28.5% of those who scored high on intuitive fit earn from 3000 to 5000 euros per month; 21.5% earn 1000-1999 euros; 18.5% earn from 2000 to 2999 euros; 17.9% earn more than 5000 euros and 13.6% earn under 1000 euros.

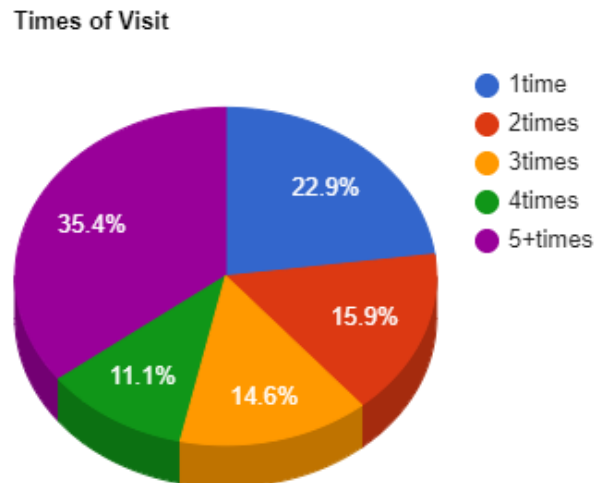
Monthly Income





### TIMES OF VISIT

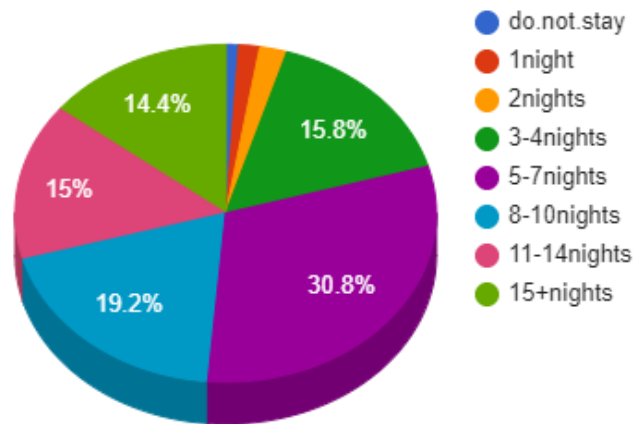
Most of those who scored high on intuitive fit have visited it five or more times (35.4%); 22.9% one time, 15.9% two times; 14.6% three times and 11.1% four times.



### LENGTH OF STAY

Most of the participants who scored high on intuitive fit spend on average 5 to 7 nights at their most favorite destination (30.8%). Furthermore, 19.2% spend on average 8-10 nights; 15.8% spend 3-4 nights; 15% spend 11-14 nights; 14.4% spend there 15 or more nights; 2.1% two nights; 1.6% one night and only 1 % do not stay overnight.

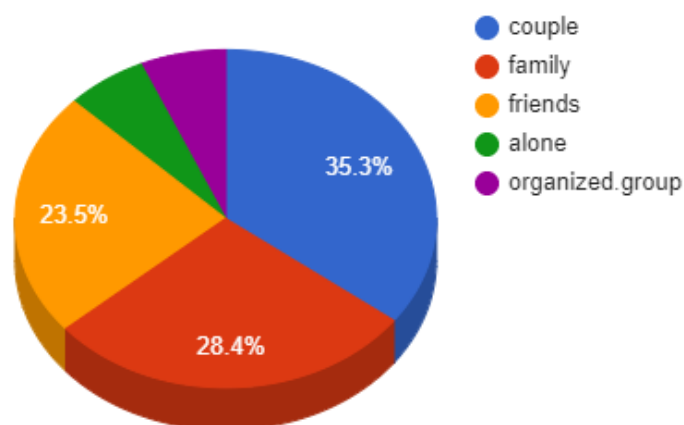
Length of stay



WAY OF TRAVEL (HOLIDAY GROUP)

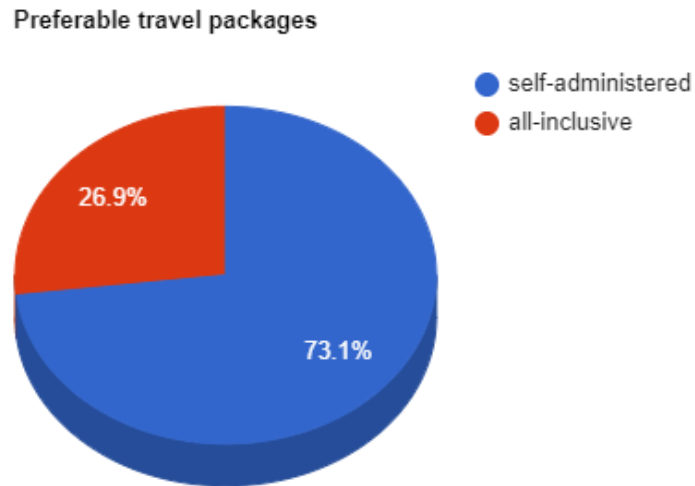
Most of the participants who scored high on intuitive fit travel as a couple (35.3%) and with their family (28.4%). 23.5% of them travel with their friends; 6.6% travel as a part of an organized group and 6.2% travel alone.

Way of travel



### PREFERABLE TRAVEL PACKAGES

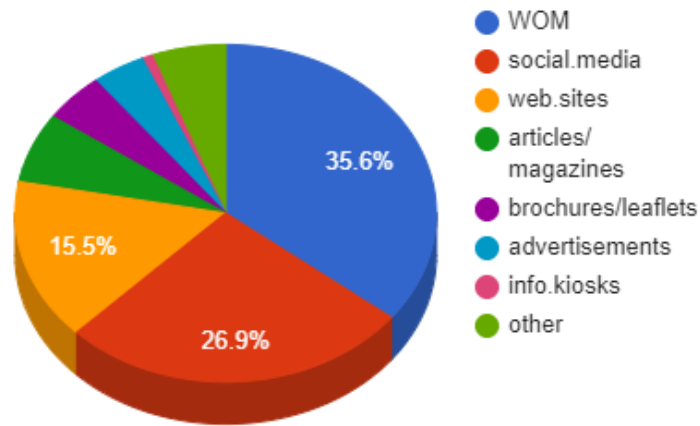
Most of the participants (73.1%) who scored high on intuitive fit prefer self-administered vacations (buy each tourism service separately) and 26.9% prefer all inclusive packages.



### MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR THAT INFLUENCED TOURISTS' DECISION TO VISIT THEIR MOST FAVORITE DESTINATION

The striking majority of people who scored high on intuitive fit were influenced by positive WOM from relatives/friends (35.6%) and social media, tripadvisor etc (26,9%). 15.5% of them were influenced by the official web sites of the destination and other web sites; 6.7% by articles in tourism and travel magazines; 5.7% by other (e.g., books, conferences, job, studies, festivals, cruises); 4.7% by brochures and leaflets of travel agents; 4.1% by advertisements on tv/radio/newspapers/magazines/cinema etc; and 0.8% by information Kiosks of the destination's National Tourism Organization.

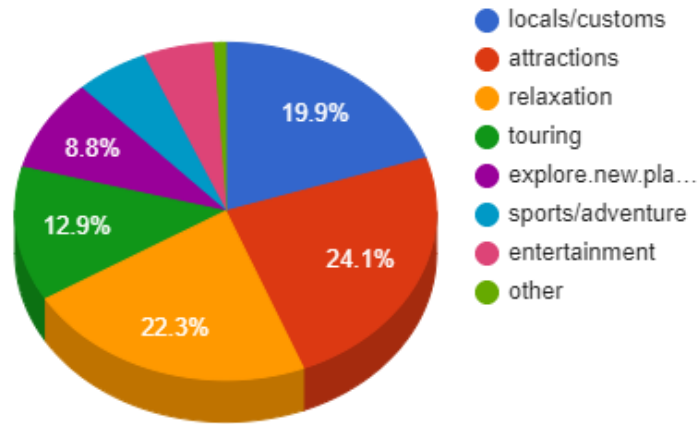
most important factor



#### MOST IMPORTANT ACTIVITIES DURING HOLIDAYS

The striking majority of people who scored high on intuitive fit claimed that their most important activity during their holidays at their most favorite destination is visiting cultural sights or attractions of the destination (24.1%), relaxation (22.3%); and get in touch with local people and their culture/customs (19.9%). Moreover, 12.9% stated that they prefer touring at this destination; 8.5% explore new places/areas there; 5.9% sports/adventure seeking; 5.4% entertainment and 1% other activities (e.g., shopping, events).

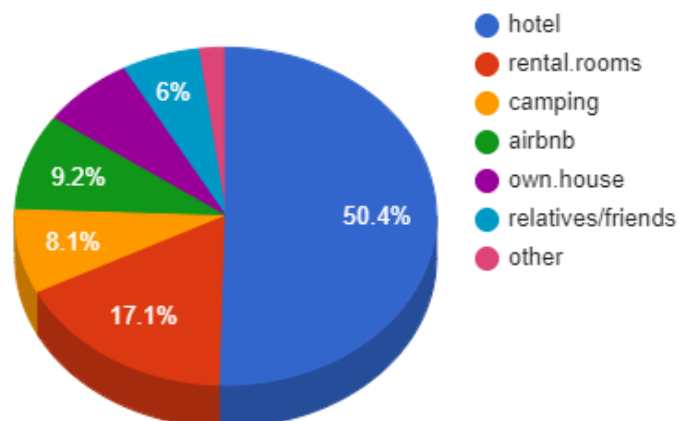
### most important activities



### TYPE OF ACCOMMODATION

The striking majority of people who scored high on intuitive fit prefer staying at hotels (50.4%) and rental rooms (17.1%). Moreover, 9.2% prefer AirBnB; 8.1% stated that they prefer camping; 7.1% stay at their own house; 6% stay at relatives/friends and 2.1% other (cruise ships, backpacking, hostels).

### Type of Accommodation

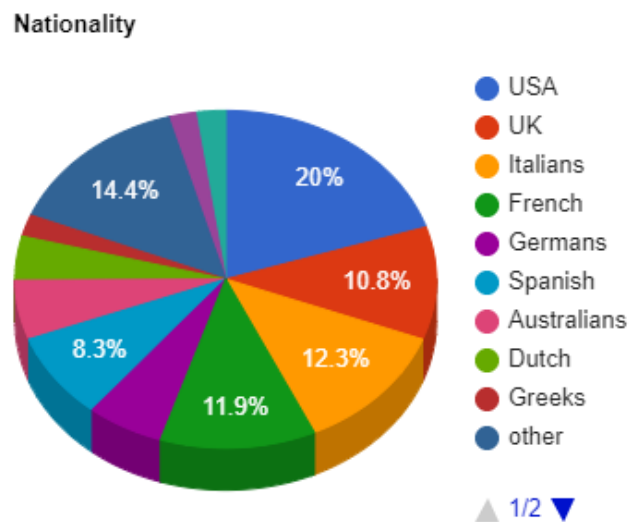


### 5.3.5.11. SELF-IDENTITY

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#### NATIONALITY

20% of those who scored high on self-destination identification came from the USA; 12.3% Italians; 11.9% were French; 10.8% British; 8.3% Spanish; 5.9% Germans; 5.7% Australians; 4.2% Dutch; 2.3% Austrians; 2.1% Greeks; and 2.1% Canadians. All the remaining (14.4%) came from other countries.

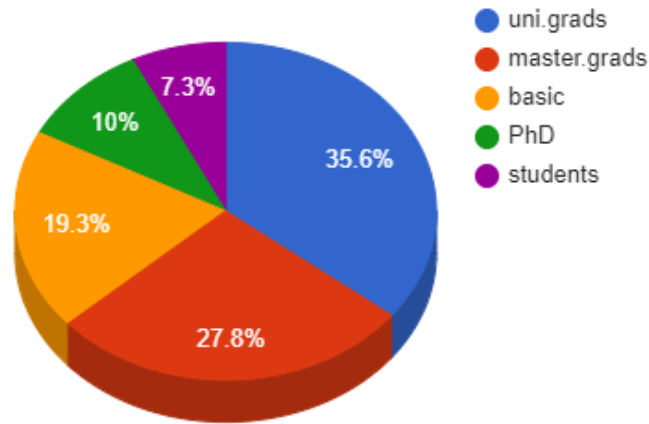


#### EDUCATIONAL LEVEL

35.6% of those who scored high on self-destination identification were university/college graduates; 27.8% master graduates; 19.3% basic/high school level; 10% PhD ; and 7.3% students.



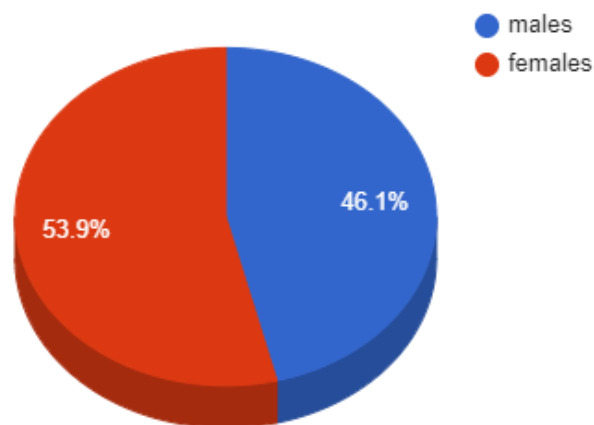
Educational Level



**GENDER**

46.1% of those who scored high on self-destination identification were males and 53.9% females.

Gender



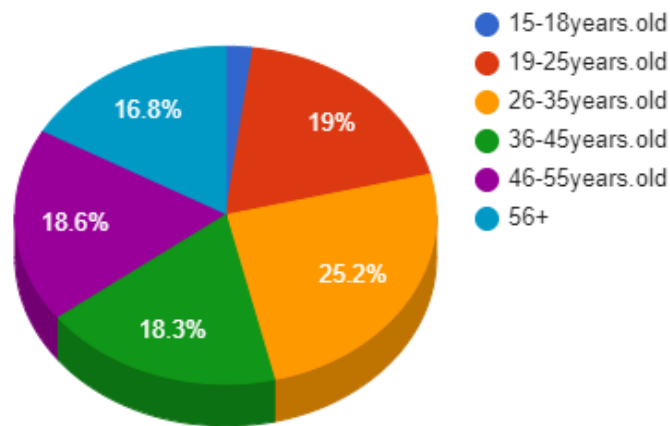




### AGE

25.2% of those who scored high on self-destination identification were 26-35 years old; 19% were 19-25 years old; 18.6% were 46-55 years old; 18.3% were 36-45 years old; 16.8% were 56 or more years old; and 2.1% were 15-18 years old.

Age

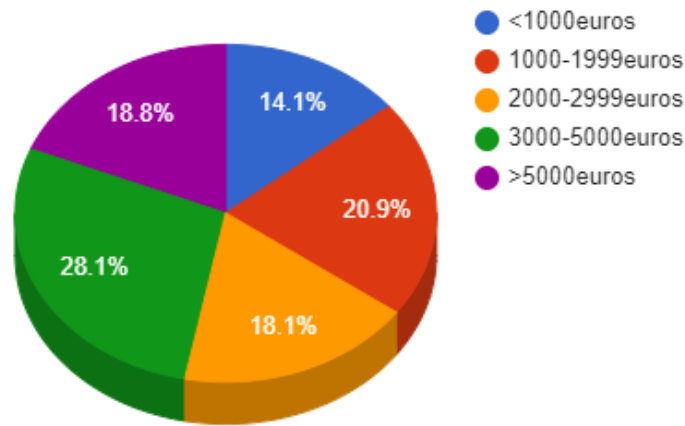


### MONTHLY INCOME

28.1% of those who scored high on self-destination identification earn from 3000 to 5000 euros per month; 20.9% earn 1000-1999 euros; 18.8% earn more than 5000 euros; 18.1% earn from 2000 to 2999 euros and 14.1% earn under 1000 euros.



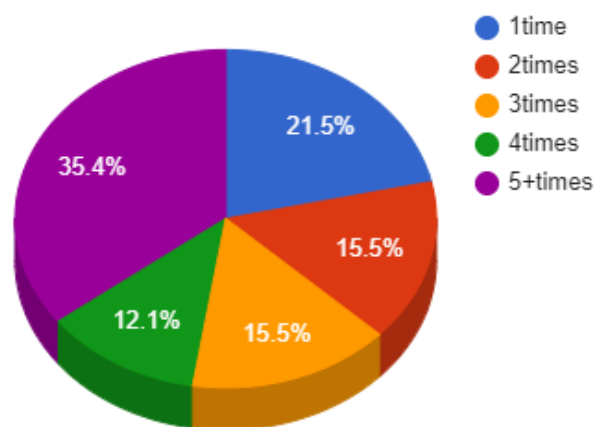
Monthly Income



**TIMES OF VISIT**

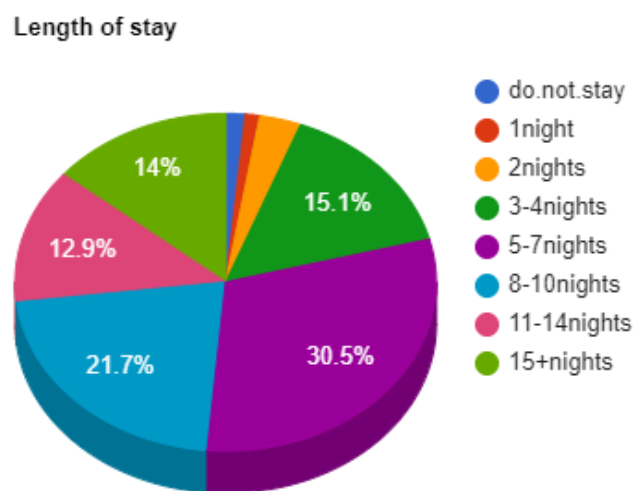
Most of those who scored high on self-destination identification have visited it five or more times (35.4%); 21.5% one time, 15.5% two times; 15.5% three times and 12.1% four times.

Times of Visit



### LENGTH OF STAY

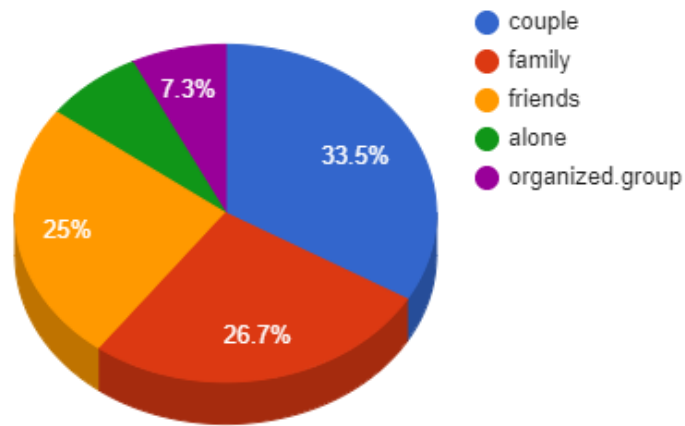
Most of the participants who scored high on self-destination identification spend on average 5 to 7 nights at their most favorite destination (30.5%). Furthermore, 21.7% spend on average 8-10 nights; 15.1% spend 3-4 nights; 14% spend there 15 or more nights; 12.9% spend 11-14 nights; 3.2% two nights; 1.1% one night and only 1.5% do not stay overnight.



### WAY OF TRAVEL (HOLIDAY GROUP)

Most of the participants who scored high on self-destination identification travel as a couple (33.5%) and with their family (26.7%). 25% of them travel with their friends; 7.5% travel alone and 7.3% travel as a part of an organized group.

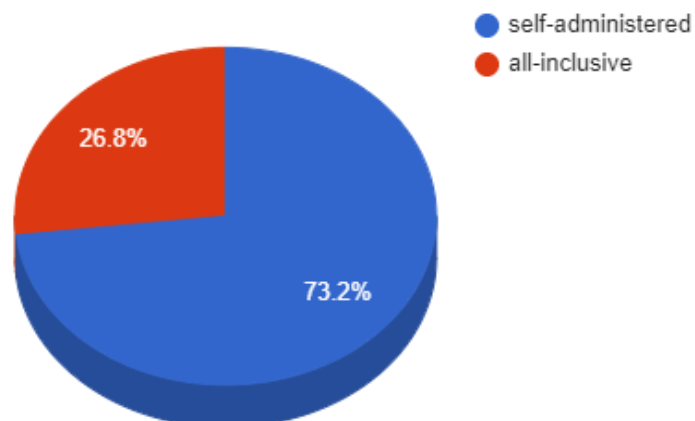
Way of travel



#### PREFERABLE TRAVEL PACKAGES

Most of the participants (73.2%) who scored high on self-destination identification prefer self-administered vacations (buy each tourism service separately) and 26.8% prefer all inclusive packages.

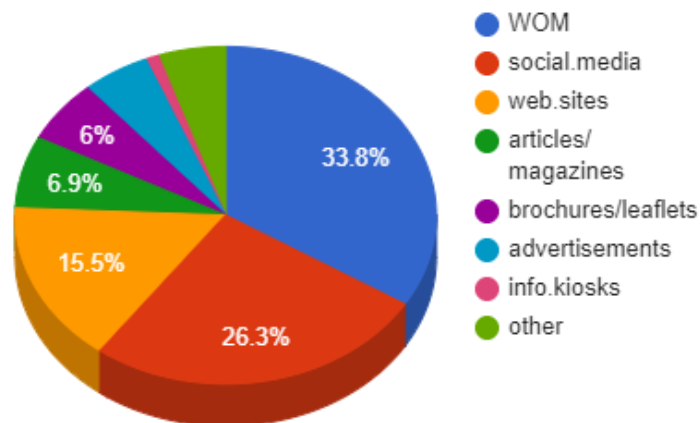
Preferable travel packages



### MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR THAT INFLUENCED TOURISTS' DECISION TO VISIT THEIR MOST FAVORITE DESTINATION

The striking majority of people who scored high on self-destination identification were influenced by positive WOM from relatives/friends/acquaintances (33.8%) and social media, tripadvisor etc (26.3%). 15.5% of them were influenced by the official web sites of the destination and other web sites; 6.9% by articles in tourism and travel magazines; 6% by brochures and leaflets of travel agents; 5.2% by other (e.g., books, conferences, job, studies, festivals, cruises); 5.2% by advertisements on tv/radio/newspapers/magazines/cinema etc; and 1.1% by information Kiosks of the destination's National Tourism Organization.

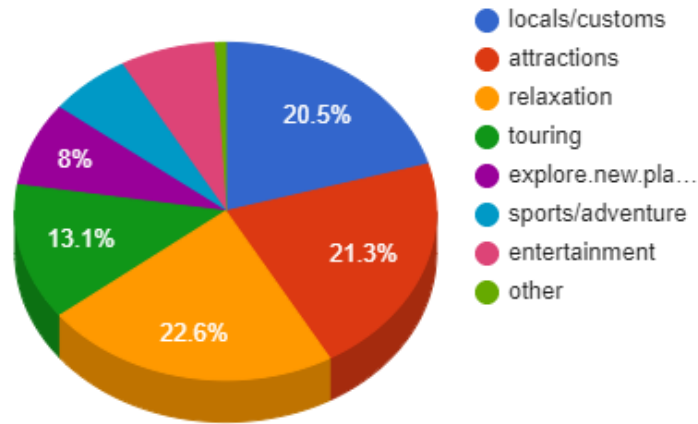
most important factor



### MOST IMPORTANT ACTIVITIES DURING HOLIDAYS

The striking majority of people who scored high on self-destination integration claimed that their most important activity during their holidays at their most favorite destination is relaxation (22.6%); visiting cultural sights or attractions of the destination (21.3%), and get in touch with local people and their culture (20.5%). Moreover, 13.1% stated that they prefer touring at this destination; 8% explore new places/areas there; 7.3% entertainment; 6.3% sports/adventure seeking, and 0.9% other activities (e.g., shopping, events).

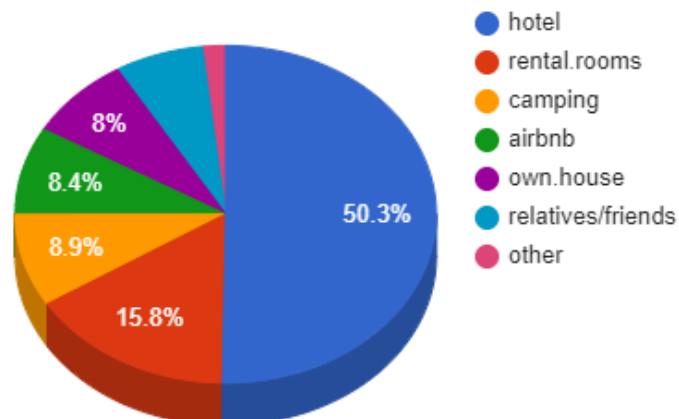
### most important activities



### TYPE OF ACCOMMODATION

The striking majority of people who scored high on self-destination integration prefer staying at hotels (50.2%) and rental rooms (15.8%). Moreover, 8.9% prefer camping; 8.4% prefer AirBnB; 8% stay at their own house; 6.8% stay at relatives/friends; and 1.8% other (cruise ships, backpacking, hostels).

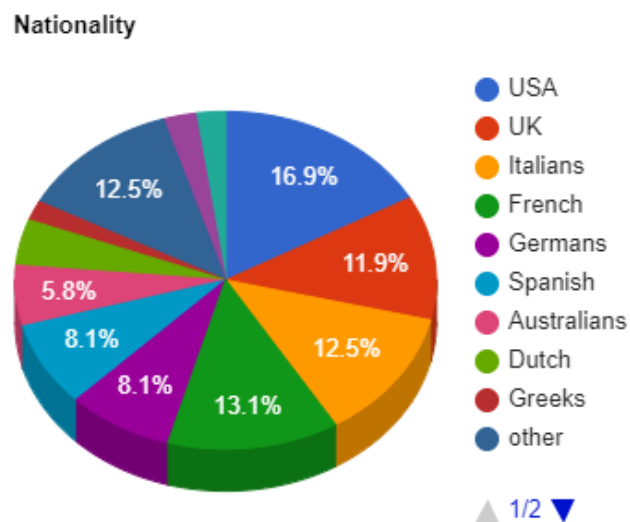
### Type of Accommodation



### 5.3.5.12. LIFE MEANING & INTRINSIC REWARDS

#### NATIONALITY

16.9% of those who scored high on life meaning and intrinsic rewards came from the USA; 13.1% were French; 12.5% Italians; 11.9% British; 8.1% Spanish; 8.1% Germans; 5.8% Australians; 4.4% Dutch; 2.5% Canadians; 2.3% Austrians and 1.9% Greeks. All the remaining (12.5%) came from other nationalities.

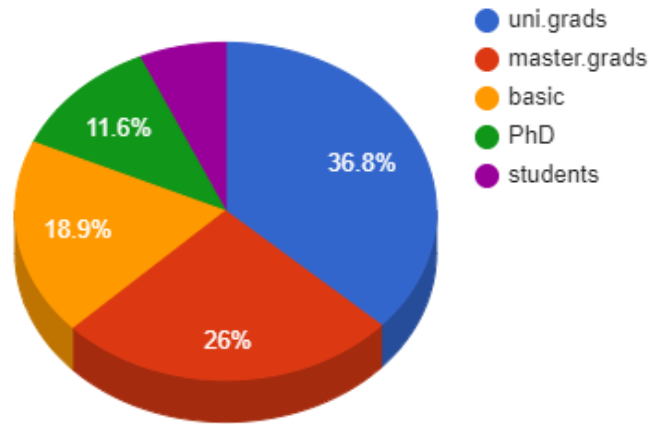


#### EDUCATIONAL LEVEL

36.8% of those who scored high on life meaning and intrinsic rewards were university/college graduates; 26% master graduates; 18.9% basic/high school level; 11.6% PhD ; and 6.7% students.



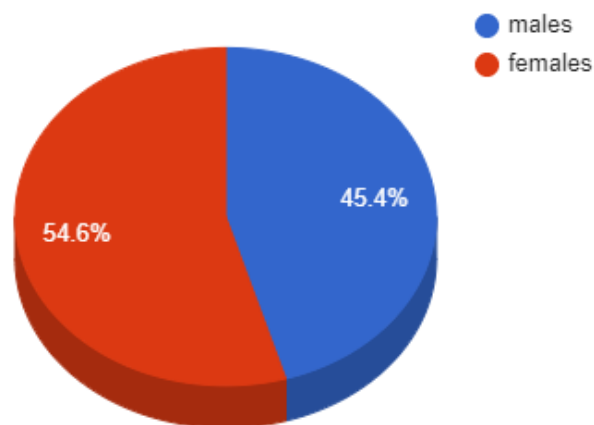
Educational Level



**GENDER**

45.4% of those who scored high on life meaning and intrinsic rewards were males and 54.6% females.

Gender



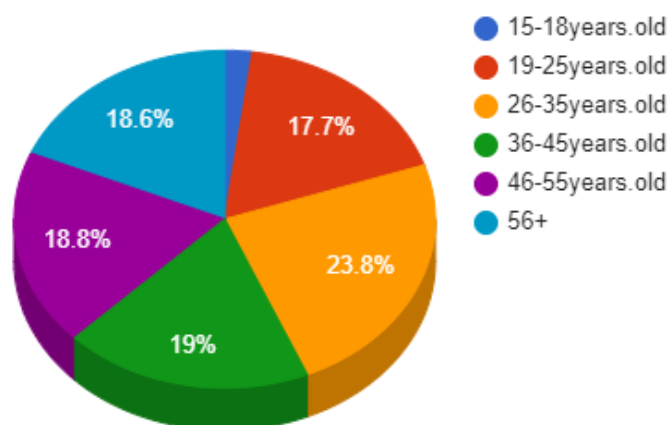




### AGE

23.8% of those who scored high on life meaning and intrinsic rewards were 26-35 years old; 19% were 36-45 years old; 18.8% were 46-55 years old; 18.6% were 56 or more years old; 17.7% were 19-25 years old; and 2.1% were 15-18 years old.

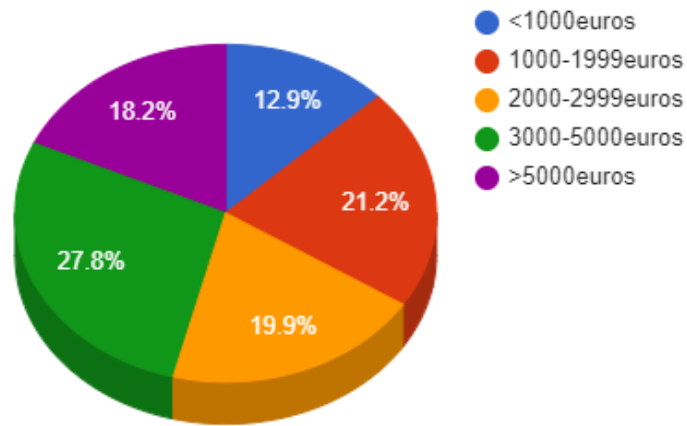
Age



### MONTHLY INCOME

27,8% of those who scored high on life meaning and intrinsic rewards earn from 3000 to 5000 euros per month; 21,2% earn 1000-1999 euros; 19,9% earn from 2000 to 2999 euros; 18,2% earn more than 5000 euros and 12,9% earn under 1000 euros.

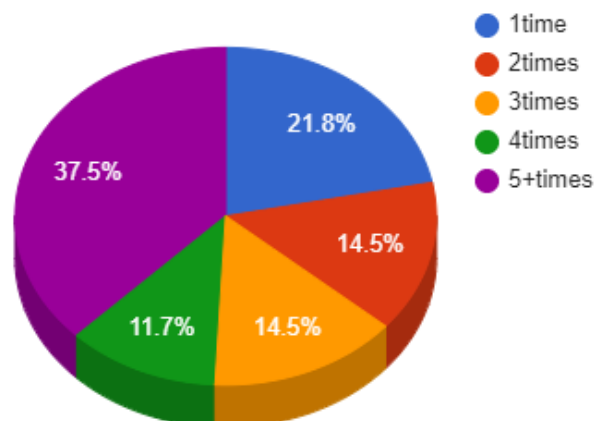
Monthly Income



#### TIMES OF VISIT

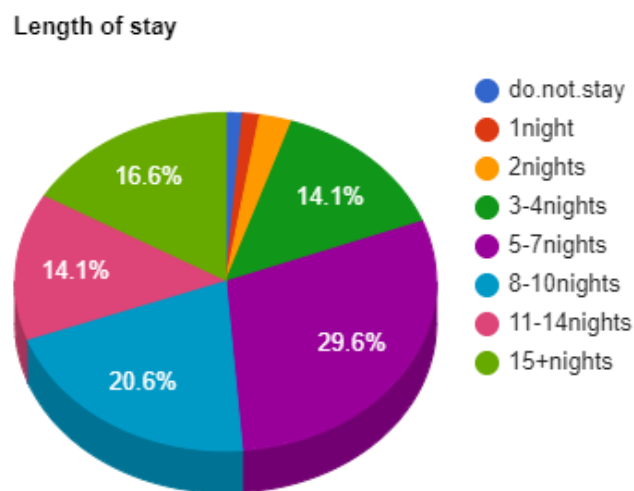
Most of those who scored high on life meaning and intrinsic rewards have visited their most favorite destination five or more times (37.5%); 21.8% one time, 14.5% two times; 14.5% three times and 11.7% four times.

Times of Visit



### LENGTH OF STAY

Most of the participants who scored high on life meaning and intrinsic rewards spend on average 5 to 7 nights at their most favorite destination (29.6%). Furthermore, 20.6% spend on average 8-10 nights; 16.6% spend there 15 or more nights; 14.1% spend 11-14 nights; 14.1% spend 3-4 nights; 2.5% two nights; 1.3% one night and only 1.3 % do not stay overnight.

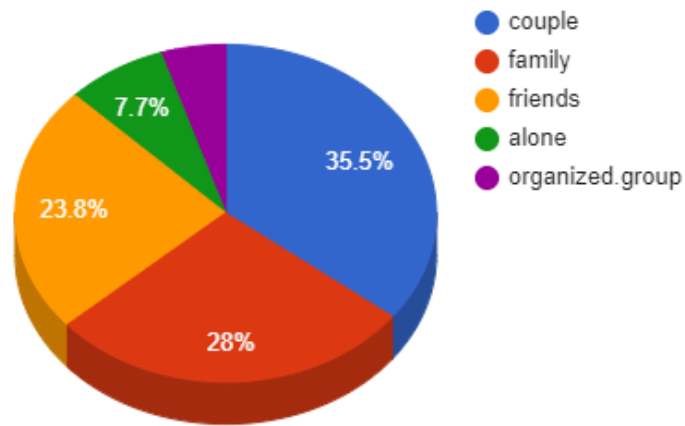


### WAY OF TRAVEL (HOLIDAY GROUP)

Most of the participants who scored high on life meaning and intrinsic rewards travel as a couple (35.5%) and with their family (28%). 23.8% of them travel with their friends; 7.7% travel alone and 5% travel as a part of an organized group.



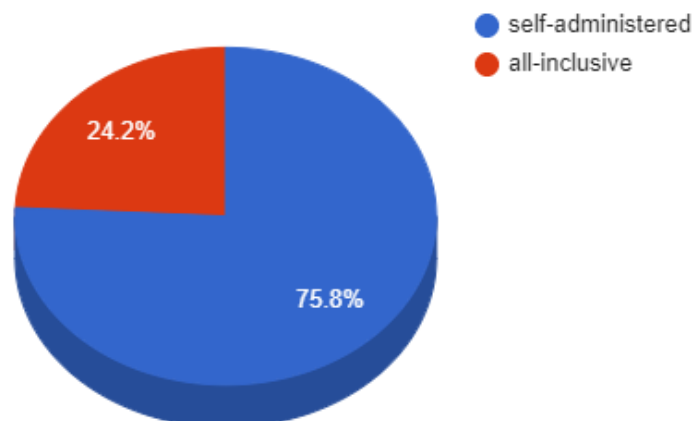
Way of travel



#### PREFERABLE TRAVEL PACKAGES

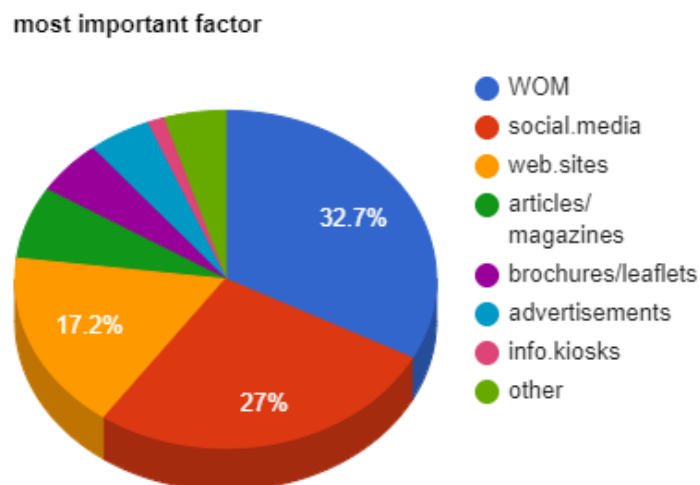
Most of the participants (75.8%) who scored high on life meaning and intrinsic rewards prefer self-administered vacations (buy each tourism service separately) and 24.2% prefer all inclusive packages.

Preferable travel packages



### MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR THAT INFLUENCED TOURISTS' DECISION TO VISIT THEIR MOST FAVORITE DESTINATION

The striking majority of people who scored high on life meaning and intrinsic rewards were influenced by positive WOM from relatives/friends/acquaintances (32.7%) and social media, tripadvisor etc (27%). 17.2% of them were influenced by the official web sites of the destination and other web sites; 6.9% by articles in tourism and travel magazines; 5.2% by brochures and leaflets of travel agents; 4.8% by other (e.g., books, conferences, job, studies, festivals, cruises); 4.8% by advertisements on tv/radio/newspapers/magazines/cinema etc; and 1.3% by information Kiosks of the destination's National Tourism Organization.



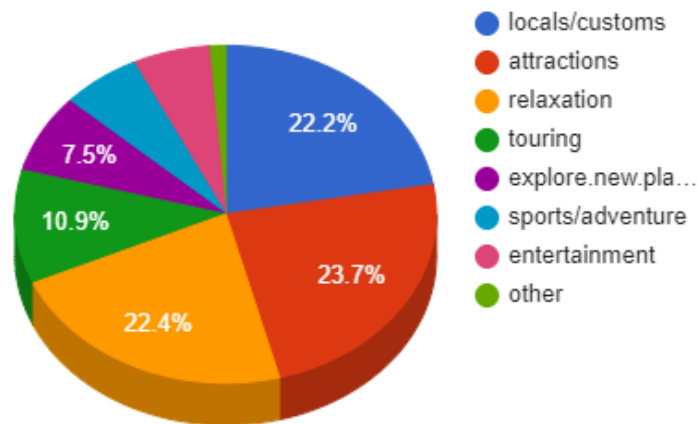
### MOST IMPORTANT ACTIVITIES DURING HOLIDAYS

The striking majority of people who scored high on life meaning and intrinsic rewards claimed that their most important activity during their holidays at their most favorite destination is visiting cultural sights or attractions of the destination (23.7%), relaxation (22.4%); and get in touch with local people and their culture (22.2%). Moreover, 10.9% stated that they prefer touring at this destination; 7.5% explore new



places/areas there; 6.1% sports/adventure seeking; 5.9% entertainment and 1.3% other activities (e.g., shopping, events).

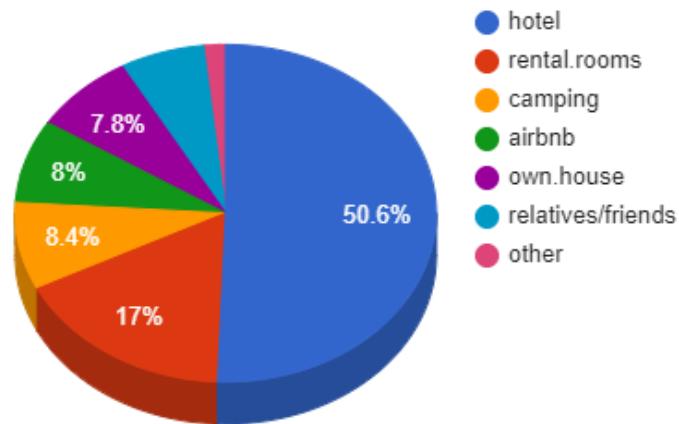
most important activities



#### TYPE OF ACCOMMODATION

The striking majority of people who scored high on life meaning and intrinsic rewards prefer staying at hotels (50.6%) and rental rooms (17%). Moreover, 8.4% prefer camping; 8% prefer AirBnB; 7.8% stay at their own house; 6.5% stay at relatives/friends; and 1.7% other (cruise ships, backpacking, hostels).

Type of Accommodation



### 5.3.5.13. NOSTALGIA & FREQUENT THOUGHTS

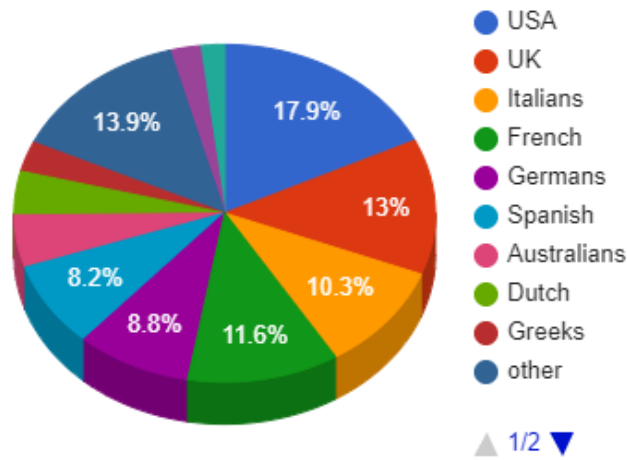
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#### NATIONALITY

17.9% of those who scored high on nostalgia and frequent thoughts came from the USA; 13% British; 11.6% were French; 10.3% Italians; 8.8% Germans; 8.2% Spanish; 5% Australians; 4.2% Dutch; 2.9% Greeks; 2.3% Canadians and 1.9% Austrians. All the remaining (13.9%) came from other nationalities.



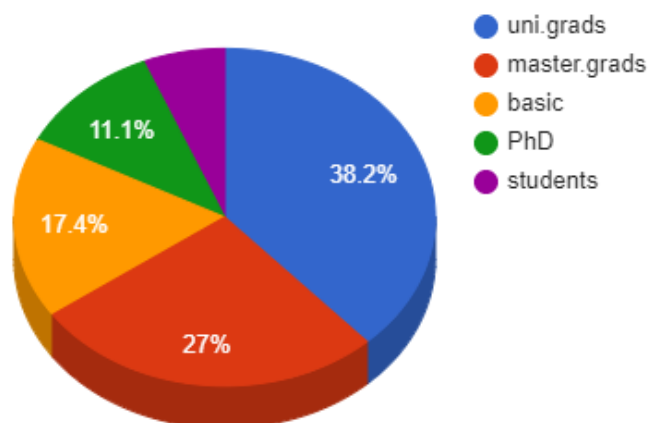
Nationality



EDUCATIONAL LEVEL

38.2% of those who scored high on nostalgia and frequent thoughts were university/college graduates; 27% master graduates; 17.4% basic/high school level; 11.1% PhD ; and 6.3% students.

Educational Level

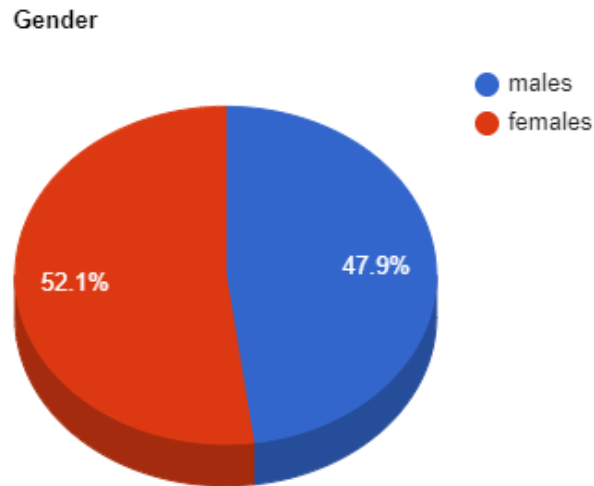






### GENDER

47.9% of those who scored high on nostalgia and frequent thoughts were males and 52.1% females.

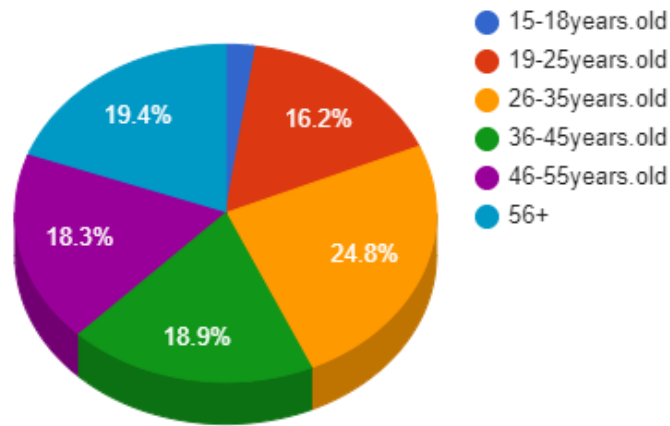


### AGE

24.8% of those who scored high on nostalgia and frequent thoughts were 26-35 years old; 19.4% were 56 or more years old; 18.9% were 36-45 years old; 18.3% were 46-55 years old; 16.2% were 19-25 years old; and 2.3% were 15-18 years old.



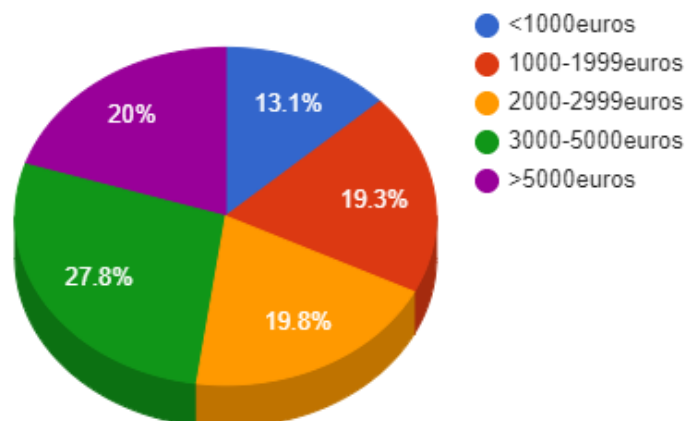
Age



### MONTHLY INCOME

27.8% of those who scored high on nostalgia and frequent thoughts earn from 3000 to 5000 euros per month; 20% earn more than 5000 euros; 19.8% earn from 2000 to 2999 euros; 19.3% earn 1000-1999 euros and 13.1% earn under 1000 euros.

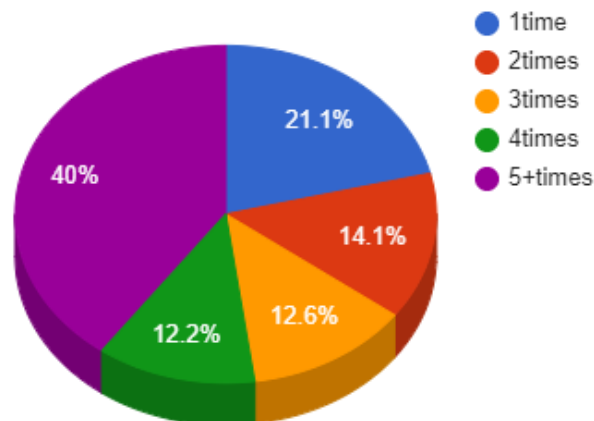
Monthly Income



### TIMES OF VISIT

Most of those who scored high on nostalgia and frequent thoughts have visited their most favorite destination five or more times (40%); 21.1% one time, 14.1% two times; 12.6% three times and 12.2% four times.

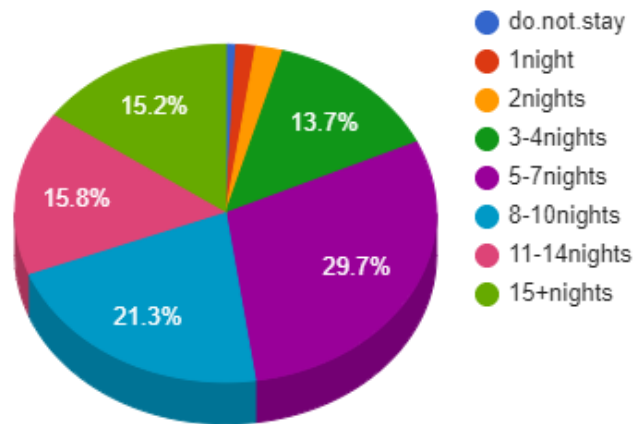
Times of Visit



### LENGTH OF STAY

Most of the participants who scored high on nostalgia and frequent thoughts spend on average 5 to 7 nights at their most favorite destination (29.7%). Furthermore, 21.3% spend on average 8-10 nights; 15.8% spend 11-14 nights; 15,2% spend there 15 or more nights; 13.7% spend 3-4 nights; 2.1% two nights; 1.5% one night and only 0.8 % do not stay overnight.

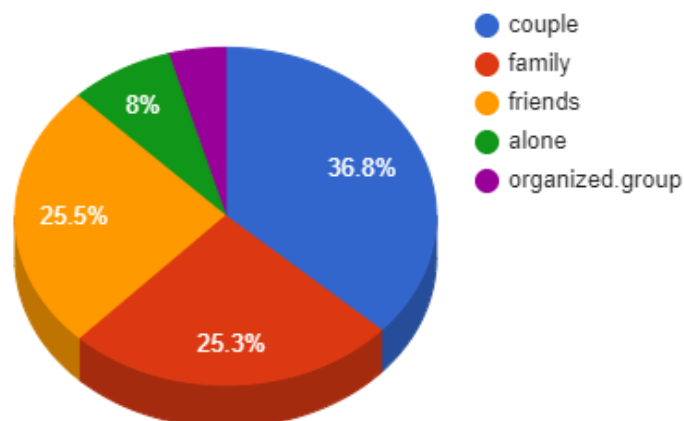
Length of stay



#### WAY OF TRAVEL (HOLIDAY GROUP)

Most of the participants who scored high on nostalgia and frequent thoughts travel as a couple (36.8%) and with their friends (25.5%). 25.3% of them travel with their family; 8% travel alone and 4.4% travel as a part of an organized group.

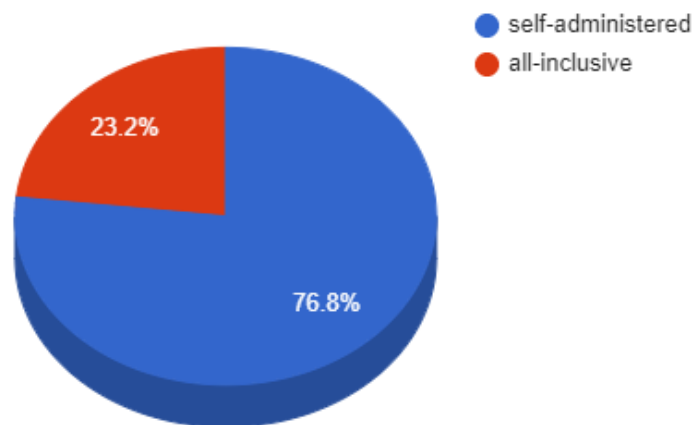
Way of travel



### PREFERABLE TRAVEL PACKAGES

Most of the participants (76.8%) who scored high on nostalgia and frequent thoughts prefer self-administered vacations (buy each tourism service separately) and 23.2% prefer all inclusive packages.

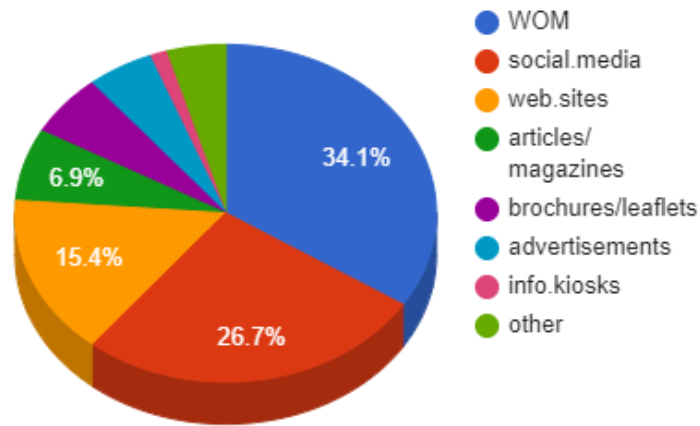
Preferable travel packages



### MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR THAT INFLUENCED TOURISTS' DECISION TO VISIT THEIR MOST FAVORITE DESTINATION

The striking majority of people who scored high on nostalgia and frequent thoughts were influenced by positive WOM from relatives/friends/acquaintances (34.1%) and social media, tripadvisor etc (26.7%). 15.4% of them were influenced by the official web sites of the destination and other web sites; 6.9% by articles in tourism and travel magazines; 5.9% by brochures and leaflets of travel agents; 5.1% by advertisements on tv/radio/newspapers/magazines/cinema etc; 4.6% by other (e.g., books, conferences, job, studies, festivals, cruises); and 1.3% by information Kiosks of the destination's National Tourism Organization.

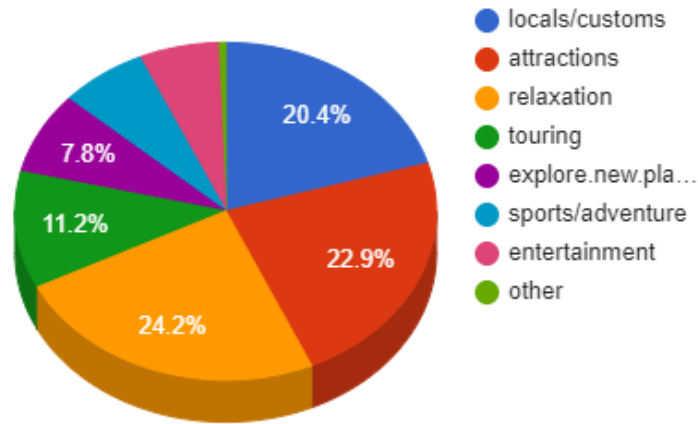
most important factor



#### MOST IMPORTANT ACTIVITIES DURING HOLIDAYS

The striking majority of people who scored high on nostalgia and frequent thoughts claimed that their most important activity during their holidays at their most favorite destination is relaxation (24.2%) and visiting cultural sights or attractions of the destination (22.9%) and get in touch with local people and their culture and customs (20.4%). Moreover, 11.2% stated that they prefer touring at this destination; 7.8% explore new places/areas there; 6.7% sports/adventure seeking; 6.1% entertainment and 0.6% other activities (e.g., shopping, events).

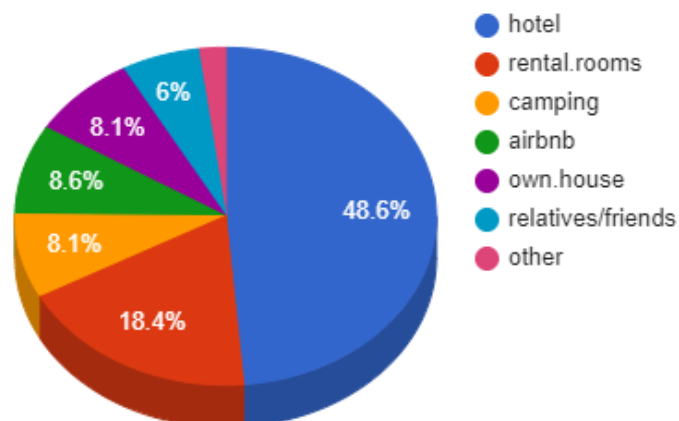
### most important activities



### TYPE OF ACCOMMODATION

The striking majority of people who scored high on nostalgia and frequent thoughts prefer staying at hotels (48.6%) and rental rooms (18.4%). Moreover, 8.6% prefer AirBnB; 8.1% prefer camping; 8.1% stay at their own house; 6% stay at relatives/friends; and 2.1% other (cruise ships, backpacking, hostels).

### Type of Accommodation





### 5.3.6. SEGMENTATION BASED ON DEMOGRAPHIC AND BEHAVIORAL CHARACTERISTICS OF PARTICIPANTS FOR EACH DESTINATION LOVE CONSTRUCT

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The demographic profile of the participants is that they mainly come from the USA, France, UK, Italy, Germany, Spain, the Netherlands, Australia, Canada, Austria and Greece. The majority falls in the age range of 19-25 years old, 26-35 years old and 56 or more years old. Most of the participants earn between 3000-5000 euros per month and between 1001-1999 euros per month. Their educational level is mainly university graduates (33,7%), basic/high school graduates (24,9%) and master graduates (23,4%).

In the following paragraphs, some slight but still remarkable differences for each tourists' demographic and travel behavior segment with respect to destination love constructs are presented. Following the procedure of Dolnicar & Mazanec (2000), demographic and behavioral segments are defined in the next step by cross-tabulating the destination love constructs. Tourists who scored 5 or higher (in a 7-point Likert scale) on each destination love construct were included. In detail:

#### 5.3.6.1. EDUCATIONAL LEVEL

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Most individuals who hold a PhD, scored higher on life meaning rewards (11,6%), self-confirmation (11,2%), nostalgia and frequent thoughts (11,1%), emotional attachment (11%), well-being (10,4%) and self-transformation (10,4%). On the contrary, people with basic education, scored higher on anthropomorphism (19,2%) and positive psychological states (20,7%). People who are university/college graduates scored higher on self-transformation (39,8%), passion/romantic driven behaviors towards their most favorite destination (39,3%), self-confirmation (39,3%), and long-term relationship with destination (39,1%). Individuals who are master graduates scored higher on anthropomorphism (28,1%), emotional solidarity with locals (28%), emotional attachment (27,5%), self-identity (27,4%) and intuitive fit (27,3%). Students scored higher on positive psychological states (9,1%), anthropomorphism (8,8%), and self-identity (8,7%).





#### 5.3.6.2. MONTHLY INCOME

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People who earn more than 5000 euros per month scored higher on self-confirmation (21,7%), well-being (20,2%), self-transformation (20%), nostalgia and frequent thoughts (20%) and emotional solidarity with locals (20%). People who earn 3000-5000 euros per month scored higher on intuitive fit (28,5%), self-identity (28,1%) and emotional attachment (28%). People who earn 2000-2999 euros per month scored higher on emotional attachment (20,5%), long term relationship with destination (20%), life meaning rewards (19,9%), nostalgia and frequent thoughts (19,8%) and emotional solidarity with locals (19,8%). People who earn 1000-1999 euros per month scored higher on passionate/romantic driven behavior towards destination (23,9%), positive psychological states (23,7%) and anthropomorphism (23,4%). Individuals who earn under 1000 euros per month scored higher on long-term relationship with destination (15,1%), and self-identity (14,1%).

#### 5.3.6.3. AGE

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Participants who fall into the highest age range (56 or more years old) scored higher on emotional solidarity with locals (20,7%), anthropomorphism (19,8%), intuitive fit (19,6%) and nostalgia (19,4%). On the contrary, the youngest people (15-18 years old) scored higher on positive psychological states (5,5%), anthropomorphism (4,8%) and passionate/romantic driven behavior towards the destination (3,2%). People who are 19-25 years old scored higher on long-term relationship with the most favorite destination (19,2%), self-identity (19%), positive psychological states (18,6%) and passionate-romantic driven behavior towards the destination (18,5%). As it concerns individuals who fall into the 26-35 years old range, most of them scored higher on self-identity (25,2%), nostalgia and frequent thoughts (24,8%), self-confirmation (24,6%), well-being (24,2%), emotional attachment (24,2%) and self-transformation (24%). Those people who are between 36 and 45 years old, scored higher on self-confirmation (20,4%), long term relationship with destination (20%), emotional attachment (19,5%), emotional solidarity with locals (19,4%) and well-being (19,4%). People who are 46-55 years old, scored higher on intuitive fit (19,9%), well-being (19,8%), positive psychological states (18,9%), life-meaning rewards (18,8%) and emotional solidarity with locals (18,8%).



#### 5.3.6.4. NATIONALITY

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People who come from the USA scored higher on self-transformation (20%), self-identity (20%), self-confirmation (18,2%) and emotional attachment (18,2%). French scored higher on well-being (13,9%) followed by emotional attachment (13,5%), passionate/romantic/driven behavior towards the destination (13,2%) and life-meaning rewards (13,1%). British scored higher on nostalgia and frequent thoughts (13%), positive psychological states (12,8%), intuitive fit (12,6%) and emotional attachment (12,4%). Italians scored higher on passionate-romantic driven behavior towards the destination (12,8%), life meaning rewards (12,5%), well-being (12,4%), self-identity (12,3%) and self-transformation (12,1%). Germans scored higher on long-term relationship with destination (10,7%), anthropomorphism (10,5%) and emotional solidarity with locals (9,8%). Dutch scored higher on anthropomorphism (5,1%), positive psychological states (10%) and emotional solidarity with locals (4,9%). Australians scored higher on life meaning rewards (5,8%), self-identity (5,7%), long-term relationship with destination (5,6%) and well-being (5,6%). Spanish scored higher on emotional solidarity with locals (9,4%), emotional attachment (9,2%) and long-term relationship with destination (8,5%). Greeks scored higher on nostalgia and frequent thoughts (2,9%), positive psychological states (2,7%), intuitive fit (2,6%), passionate/romantic driven behavior towards the destination (2,5%) and self-confirmation (2,5%).

#### 5.3.6.5. GENDER

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Women scored higher on long-term relationship with destination (55,7%), passionate/romantic drive behavior (54,8%), life meaning rewards (54,6%), self-transformation (54,5%), well being (54,4%), intuitive fit (54,4%) and self-confirmation (54,2%). Men scored higher on anthropomorphism (48,7%), nostalgia (47,9%), positive psychological states (46,8%), emotional solidarity with locals (46,5%) and emotional attachment (46,3%).



#### 5.3.6.6. TIMES OF VISIT

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Individuals who have visited only one time their most favorite destination scored higher on anthropomorphism (29,2%), positive psychological states (27,6%) and passionate/romantic driven behavior towards the destination (25,2%). People who have visited two times their most favorite destination scored higher on self-transformation (16,2%), passionate/romantic driven behavior (15,8%) and intuitive fit (15,9%). Those who have visited three times their most favorite destination scored higher on self-identity (15,5%) and emotional solidarity with locals (15,2%). Participants who have visited four times their most favorite destination scored higher on self-confirmation (12,8%), well-being (12,6%), nostalgia (12,2%) and self-identity (12,2%). Finally, people who have visited their most favorite destination five or more times scored higher on long-term relationship with destination (41%), nostalgia (40%), emotional attachment (40%), emotional solidarity with locals (38,2%) and life meaning rewards (37,5%).

#### 5.3.6.7. LENGTH OF STAY

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People who spend usually on average 15 or more nights at their most favorite destination scored higher on life meaning rewards (16,6%), well-being (15,8%), emotional attachment (15,4%), nostalgia (15,2%), self-confirmation (15,2%) and self-transformation (15,2%). People who usually spend on average 11-14 nights scored higher on emotional solidarity with locals (17,2%) and passionate/romantic driven behavior towards destination (17%). Moreover, individuals who spend usually 8-10 nights at the destination scored higher on self-confirmation (21,8%), self-identity (21,7%), well-being (21,3%), nostalgia (21,3%) and long term relationship with destination (21,3%). In addition, people who spend usually 5-7 nights at their most favorite destination scored higher anthropomorphism (32,1%), positive psychological states (31,9%), intuitive fit (30,8%), self-identity (30,5%) and passionate/romantic driven behavior (30,5%). People who spend usually 3-4 nights at their most favorite destination scored higher on positive psychological states (16,2%), intuitive fit (15,8%) and long-term relationship with destination (15,4%). Individuals who spend usually 2 nights at their most favorite destination scored higher on anthropomorphism



(4,5%), emotional solidarity with locals (3,2%), self-identity (3,2%) and self-confirmation (3%). People who spend usually one night at their most favorite destination scored higher on emotional attachment (1,9%) and anthropomorphism. Finally, people who usually do not stay overnight at their most favorite destination scored higher on self-identity (1,5%) and life meaning rewards(1,3%).

#### 5.3.6.8. WAY OF TRAVEL (TRAVEL GROUP)

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People who usually travel alone scored higher on anthropomorphism (8,1%), nostalgia (8%), positive psychological states (7,9%), long-term relationship (7,8%) and life meaning rewards (7,7%). On the other hand, people who travel usually as a part of an organized group scored higher on self-identity (7,3%), anthropomorphism (6,9%), intuitive fit (6,6%) and positive psychological states (6,4%). Individuals who travel usually as a couple scored higher on emotional attachment (36,9%), nostalgia (36,8%), and well-being (36,3%). Individuals who travel usually with their family scored higher on positive psychological states (29%), anthropomorphism (28,5%), emotional solidarity with locals (28,4%) intuitive fit (28,4%) and well-being (28,2%). Finally, people who travel usually with their friends scored higher on long-term relationship with destination (26,3%), nostalgia (25,5%), self-transformation (24,7%), passion (24,5%) and self-confirmation (24,2%).

#### 5.3.6.9. PREFERABLE TRAVEL PACKAGES

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People who prefer self-administered vacations scored higher on nostalgia (76,8%), well being (76,5%), emotional attachment (76,4%), passionate/romantic driven behavior towards the destination (76,2%), long term relationship with destination (76%), life meaning rewards (75,8%), self-transformation (75,2%) and emotional solidarity with locals (74,2%). Individuals who prefer all inclusive travel packages scored higher on positive psychological states (30%), anthropomorphism (27,4%), intuitive fit (26,9%), self-identity (26,8%) and self-confirmation (26,4%).



#### 5.3.6.10. MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR THAT INFLUENCED TOURISTS' DECISION TO VISIT THEIR MOST FAVORITE DESTINATION

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People who were influenced mostly by WOM scored higher on long-term relationship with destination (35,9%), positive psychological states (35,6%) and intuitive fit (35,6%). Individuals who were mostly influenced by social media scored higher on emotional attachment (28%), well-being (27,8%), self-transformation (27,7%) and emotional solidarity with locals (27,4%). People who were mostly influenced by official websites of the destination as well as other web sites scored higher on anthropomorphism (17,3%) long term relationship with destination (16,9%), well-being (16,6%), passionate/romantic driven behavior towards the destination (16,5%) and self-transformation (16,2%). Individuals who were mostly influenced by articles in tourism and travel magazines scored higher on emotional solidarity with locals (8,8%), anthropomorphism (8,3%) and passionate/romantic driven behavior towards the destination (8%). People who were mostly influenced by advertisements on tv, radio, cinema, magazines, newspapers scored higher on self-transformation (5,5%), well-being (5,3%), passionate/romantic driven behavior (5,3%), self-identity (5,2%) and life-meaning & intrinsic rewards (5,2%). Individuals who were influenced mainly by brochures and leaflets of travel agents scored higher on self-confirmation (6,2%), self-identity (6%), life meaning rewards (6%), nostalgia (5,9%) and anthropomorphism (5,9%). People who were mainly influenced by information kiosks of the destination's National Tourism Organization scored higher on anthropomorphism (2%), positive psychological states (1,4%) and nostalgia (1,3%). Finally, people who were mostly influenced by books, conferences, job, studies and cruise programs scored higher on emotional solidarity with locals (6%), intuitive fit (5,7%), self-confirmation (5,6%), emotional attachment (5,6%) and positive psychological states (5,5%).

#### 5.3.6.11. Most important activity at loved destination

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The majority of people who visit attractions at their loved destination scored higher on passionate/romantic driven behavior towards the destination (26,5%), self-transformation (26,4%), well-being (25,2%) and self-confirmation (25,1%). People



who mainly prefer relaxing at their most favorite destination scored higher on emotional attachment (24,7%), positive psychological states (24,6%), long term relationship with destination (24,5%), anthropomorphism (24,5%) and nostalgia (24,2%). Moreover, individuals who mainly prefer to get in touch with the locals and their culture at their most favorite destination scored higher on emotional solidarity with locals (23,1%), life meaning rewards (22,2%), emotional attachment (20,7%), self-identity (20,5%), nostalgia (20,4%) and anthropomorphism (20%). People who mainly prefer touring at the destination scored higher on self-identity (13,1%), intuitive fit (12,9%) and anthropomorphism (12,3%). Individuals who stated that they prefer exploring new areas at their most favorite destination scored higher on positive psychological states (9,5%), well-being (9,1%), self-transformation (8,6%) and intuitive fit (8,5%). People who are sport/adventure seekers scored higher on emotional solidarity with locals (6,9%) and self-confirmation (6,9%). Finally, people who prefer entertainment at their most favorite destination scored higher on self-identity (7,3%).

#### 5.3.6.12. TYPE OF ACCOMMODATION

The majority of people who prefer staying in hotels at their loved destination scored higher on self-confirmation (51,5%), emotional solidarity with locals (51,1%) and self-transformation (51%). People who prefer rental rooms scored higher on positive psychological states (21%), passionate/romantic driven behavior towards the destination (19,3%) and anthropomorphism (18,8%). Individuals who prefer camping scored higher on anthropomorphism (10%) and long term relationship with destination (9,2%). People who prefer AirBnB scored higher on intuitive fit (9,2%), positive psychological states (8,9%), passionate behavior towards the destination (8,9%) and emotional attachment (8,9%). People who stay in their own house at their most favorite destination scored higher on nostalgia (8,1%), self-identity (8%), emotional attachment (8%), life meaning rewards (7,9%), long-term relationship with destination (7,9%) and well-being (7,9%). Finally, people who usually stay at their friends/relatives scored higher on long term relationship with destination (6,9%), self-identity (6,8%) and positive psychological states (6,7%).



## 5.4. MAIN ANALYSES

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The main objective of this research is to study and develop both theoretically and empirically the novel notion of destination love and clarify the interrelationships among destination love and other marketing concepts such as satisfaction and word of mouth. In order to accomplish this purpose, a set of relationships will be tested jointly.

### DIMENSIONALITY, RELIABILITY ASSESSMENT AND CONSTRUCT VALIDATION

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Academics usually go to great lengths to prove and justify theoretical relationships between constructs, and often ignore the links between measurement items and constructs, which by default is assumed to be reflective –items are a reflection of the construct- (Petter, Straub & Rai, 2007).

Often, though, the nature of the construct is not reflective, but rather formative- the items describe and define the construct rather than vice versa (Petter, Straub & Rai, 2007). With structural equation modeling techniques (covariance-based and component-based), academics can better evaluate both structural and measurement models (Petter, Straub & Rai, 2007).

Table 25 shows the differences between Reflective and Formative Constructs.





Table 25: Differences between Reflective and Formative Constructs

	Reflective	Formative
<b>Causality direction</b>	Construct to indicator	Indicator to construct
<b>Develop</b>	Scales	Indices
<b>Example</b>	Attitudinal scale	Economic index
<b>Develop via</b>	Factor analysis	Content specification
<b>Indicators</b>	Reflect a construct	Define a construct
<b>Number of indicators</b>	Sample of possible indicators	Census of relevant indicators
<b>Indicator nomenclature</b>	Effect	Causal, composite, formative
<b>Indicator substitution</b>	Can substitute	Cannot substitute
<b>Indicator correlation</b>	Must correlate	Could correlate
<b>Indicator antecedents and consequences</b>	Should be similar	May differ
<b>Construct changes</b>	Should change indicators	May change indicators
<b>Dimensionality</b>	Uni-dimensional	Multi-dimensional

Source: Olaru & Hofacker, 2009 (adapted from Bollen & Lennox, 1991; Diamontopoulos & Winklhofer, 2001; Jarvis et al., 2003).

Destination love is a novel concept in the literature. The main objective of this study is to define and operationalize destination love construct. Destination love is a latent, multidimensional construct that is formed by a combination of the items, stemmed from this study's qualitative researches-in depth-interviews and open-ended written questions (study 1 & 2), as well as the literature review. By specifying a multi-item construct, like destination love, as well as its measurement items- also known as indicators, measures or variables- as formative or reflective is a basic first step in construct development and crucial for establishing construct validity (Jarvis et al., 2003; Olaru & Hofacker, 2009).

Destination love model is comprised of seven dimensions. Briefly, the type of destination love model is considered as a multidimensional, reflective-formative third order model. Formative constructs, such as destination love, are an example of multidimensional constructs that are capturing multiple dimensions (Petter, Straub &





Rai, 2007) and requiring a census of relevant items (Murphy, Olaru & Hofacker, 2009). However, it should be stressed that not all multidimensional constructs are formative (Petter, Straub & Rai, 2007). In order to develop the formative, multidimensional destination love construct, its multiple sub-constructs and subsequently their measurement items are essential to fully capture the whole spectrum of the destination love construct.

In particular, destination love is perceived to be comprised of first-order, uni-dimensional, reflective, constructs. Each first order construct represents a specific '*phenomenon*' (e.g., Bagozzi, 2011) or '*feeling*' felt with or experienced at a destination. As such, its presence is reflected upon the sample of items used to measure it. All previous research efforts of this dissertation secure that these items are a representative and true sample of the universe of items available (e.g., Bagozzi, 2011). Thus the first order latent variables of the model are reflective, indicating further that an increase in these variables (or feelings) should be reflected in all of the corresponding items. The second order latent variables of the model are abstract amalgamations of the initial feelings and are formed *ad hoc* each time a destination appears in tourists' senses (visits, sees, hears about, etc.). In the same sense, the third order of '*Destination love*' is formed as the integrative sum of all *relevant* feelings generated *at* and *by* a destination. Thus, the higher order constructs of destination love and ultimately destination love construct, is not reflective but rather formative, since, due to its universality and cultural diversity base, the empirical meaning of destination love is global. "*That is, empirical meaning and the estimates of formative loadings are in a sense spread out across the model*" (Bagozzi, 2011: 266). In particular, the second-order multidimensional constructs of destination love have a formative relationship with their sub-constructs, which do not necessarily share a common theme, and each of them captures a unique aspect of the specific conceptual domain. Destination love at the third level is a formative construct, since it is formed via these seven dimensions and their corresponding items.

The implications of this conceptualization of *destination love* are being focused mainly in the relationships among the higher order construct and the lower order ones, i.e. an increase in destination love may not increase each of the seven dimensions and each of these seven dimensions may not correlate. For example, if a tourist's emotional solidarity with locals increases, so does the destination love, but it is not



possible to increase a tourist's emotional solidarity with locals by changing destination love-via the increase of other destination love dimensions (e.g., Fried, 2017). In addition, this formative reasoning is supported by this study's findings that while the dimensions that form destination love are felt across diverse destinations, these dimensions are nuanced, expressed and manifested quite distinctly for each destination (in line with Swanson, 2017). Each destination evokes a distinct mixture of love manifestations to each individual. Moreover, in line with the branding context, where consumers can love more than one brand within the same or in different product categories (Sarkar, 2014), the tourists' love feeling towards a destination is not exclusive or exclusionary (Swanson, 2017), since people can love more than one destination, for different reasons, and they *"do not feel like they are "cheating on" one destination by visiting another"* (Swanson, 2017: 92). Data from this research show that indeed tourists, in their striking majority, have more than one favorite destination (72.8%) and get different feelings from different destinations. This resulted in the identification of the different dimensions of destination love. Additionally, the formative reasoning of destination love can further rely on the emotion literature, where evidence exist for the universality of various aspects of emotions (Frijda & Mesquita, 1994), although cultural differences exist and influence both the display and feeling rules, which could apply to emotional spontaneity and expressive display in total, as well as to the feeling and displaying of emotions in specific settings or in particular types of emotion (Frijda & Mesquita, 1994). Humans of different cultural backgrounds can give their own categorization on a universal emotion. Conversely, humans can impose universal categories on a culture-bound reality (Russell, 1991). Tomkins & McCarter (1964) argue that differentiated expressions of emotions across cultures can be seen as *"dialects"* of the *"more universal grammar of emotion"* (p. 127). Concerning love, Jankowiak and Fischer (1992) argue that it is universal across different cultures, whereas other academics (e.g., Kim & Hatfield, 2004) found differences in how different cultural groups perceive love.

The first order dimensions are reflective constructs, which by definition, should be unidimensional since all of their items depend on and manifest/reflect the underlying latent construct or in other words measure the same aspect of the unobservable



construct (Petter, Straub & Rai, 2007; Murphy, Olaru & Hofacker, 2009). Reflective items constitute a sample from the universe of all items that could reflect the construct (Murphy, Olaru & Hofacker, 2009: 732). A reflective construct assumes that the measurement items are similar and interchangeable, meaning that the items share a common theme, usually pose statements that direct respondents' attention repeatedly to the same concept and that the direction of causality is from the construct to the measurement items (Petter, Straub & Rai, 2007; Diamantopoulos et al., 2008; Coltman et al., 2008; Hair et al., 2017). Apparently, unidimensionality constitutes a key assumption within covariance-based SEM for reflective constructs (Petter, Straub & Rai, 2007). Moreover, measurement items for reflective constructs are required to covary with one another, which is not the case in formative constructs, meaning that the measurement items comprising the formative representation of destination love may covary, but would not necessarily need to covary (Petter, Straub & Rai, 2007; Diamantopoulos et al., 2008). In a nutshell, the items of the first order constructs reflect the constructs. An increase in each item of a specific first order construct may yield a corresponding increase in the construct, but an increase in the construct itself should increase its items (Murphy, Olaru & Hofacker, 2009). Causality is from each first order construct to its items. Dropping one of the items of first order construct should cause no major change to the construct and its items should correlate (Murphy, Olaru & Hofacker, 2009). Thus, the scales of first order constructs are reflective scales.

Even though there are well established validation procedures as well as statistical tests for assessing the reflective measures validity (Straub et al., 2004), the use of formative constructs is acute in covariance-based SEM where the ability to converge on a solution is extremely sensitive to the number of items in the model constructs (Petter, Straub & Rai, 2007).



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### 5.4.1. COVARIANCE BASED SEM ANALYSIS

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Concerning the quantitative research, the specification of the reflective models, and the confirmatory nature of the structural relationships lead to the use of SEM analysis, which will yield a global test for model fit, significance tests and confidence intervals for individual model parameters as well as tests for comparing fit of different models. According to Kline (2005), SEM could be viewed as mainly confirmatory analysis. This means that the model is given in the beginning of the analysis, and one of the main questions to be answered is whether it is supported by the data. SEM has currently become an essential tool in applied multivariate analysis for theory testing and causal modeling (Reisinger & Mavondo, 2006). Moreover, SEM is preferable to conventional statistical methods (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson & Tatham, 1998; Reisinger & Turner, 1999), because it provides stronger tests (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson & Tatham, 1998). Unlike covariance-based methodologies, multiple regressions and analysis of variance techniques do not provide a single goodness of fit metric for the entire model. Instead the R<sup>2</sup> values of individual dependent variables are usually examined. However, the R<sup>2</sup> value is a descriptive index, and the evaluation of goodness-of-fit is somewhat subjective (Iacobucci, 2010), whereas covariance-based methodologies have the ability to accommodate multiple interrelated dependence relationship in a single model and produce an overall assessment of the model's fit, usually based on a chi square statistic (Singh & Wilkes, 1996; Baloglu, 2000). Thus, SEM is a more powerful technique than multiple regressions and analysis of variance techniques (Reisinger & Mavondo, 2006). The number of tourism studies that applied SEM has been increasing, as SEM is a powerful statistical technique successfully used in social, psychological and behavioural science research (Reisinger & Mavondo, 2006). Moreover, the SEM technique has considerable potential for theory testing and development as well as validation of constructs (Anderson, 1987; Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). The properties of the research variables in the study models are tested with an AMOS 21 procedure and the maximum likelihood (ML) method (see Bentler, 1983; Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). The advantage of using AMOS is that an overall model fit is produced as well as modification indices for suggested model improvements (Hart & Rosenberger, 2004). Maximum likelihood (ML) is the most commonly used estimation method in



SEM (Kline, 2005; Tsoukatos & Rand, 2006). It maximizes the probability that the observed covariances are drawn from a population that has its variance-covariance matrix generated by the process implied by the model, assuming multivariate normality (Kline, 2005; Tsoukatos & Rand, 2006). Multivariate normality is not generally met in practice and several estimation methods for overcoming the fit problems arising from its absence have been developed (Tsoukatos & Rand, 2006). ML, itself, is fairly robust against violations from multivariate normality (Kline, 2005; Tsoukatos & Rand, 2006). However, ML requires large samples as it is more precise in large samples. The minimum sample size to ensure appropriate use of ML is 100 for some researchers (Reisinger & Mavondo, 2006) or 200 for some others (Tsoukatos & Rand, 2006). This study's sample size meets all these requirements.

Even if the items that jointly constitute destination love were emerged and are known from study 1 and study 2, there is a need to know which are the most important components/items of destination love to be strong (Batra et al., 2012). According to the same academics, it is also crucial to investigate how these items/ components are organized and more specifically, "*whether some of them conceptually and empirically combine into higher-order structures, or split up further at lower levels of abstraction*" (Batra et al., 2012: 21). Hence the same procedure with that of Batra's et al. (2012) was followed to Study 3, which builds on this research effort's grounded theory study, using SEM to address these questions.

More specifically, in this study, the statistical tests for global model fit is done with ML procedure. The null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is that the model fits the data and the alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ) is that the model does not fit the data. AMOS computes a test statistic CMIN for which the following holds:

If null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is true, CMIN follows asymptotically (for  $N \rightarrow \infty$ ), a chi-square distribution with degrees of freedom (df) equal to number of variances for observed variables minus the number of identified parameters. The statistical test for global model fit allows the determination of the probability level ( $p$ ) of an observed CMIN value:

- ✓ Locate the observed CMIN value under the appropriate chi-square distribution
- ✓ Probability level  $p =$  probability of observing such a CMIN value or a larger one if  $H_0$  is true



- ✓  $p$ =area at the right of the observed CMIN value under the appropriate chi-square distribution
- ✓ Decision rules
  - If  $p < 0.05$ : reject  $H_0$  at 5% level
  - If  $p < 0.01$ : reject  $H_0$  at 1% level

Thus, in order for the tested model to fit statistically the data, the  $p$ -value should be greater than 0.05 or 0.01. The acceptance of null hypothesis means that the model fits the data and provides acceptable explanation of the data.

The issue of model evaluation explodes in SEM because of the plethora of fit indices. In line with the recommendations in the literature (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1982; Bentler, 1990; Browne & Cudeck, 1993; Kline, 2005), the study's models overall fit assessed on the following criteria: chi-square goodness of-fit test (CMIN), which is sensitive to sample size and thus more fit indices are necessary (Ramkissoon et al., 2013), such as Root-mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA); goodness-of-fit index (GFI); comparative fit index (CFI), Adjusted goodness-of-fit index (AGFI), Normed Fit Index (NFI) and Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) (e.g., Bentler & Bonett, 1980; Joreskog & Sorbom, 1989; Byrne, 2001). Among the SEM fit indices, the  $\chi^2$  (or CMIN) is the only inferential statistic; all the others are descriptive (Tsoukatos & Rand, 2006). This implies that only for the  $\chi^2$  (or CMIN) we can make statements regarding significance or hypothesis testing, and for the rest indices, there exist only "rules-of-thumb" to evaluate goodness-of-fit (Tsoukatos & Rand, 2006). CFI is the "comparative fit index" and is a goodness-of-fit index and it ranges from 0 to 1 (e.g., Kline, 2005). Diamantopoulos and Siguaw (2000: 88) argue that the results of the chi-square test used in combination with the RMSEA, standardized RMR, GFI and CFI indices are sufficient to evaluate a model's overall fit. The goodness of fit index (GFI) is an indicator of the amount of variance and covariance accounted for by the model and a value exceeding 0,90 is considered as reflecting acceptable fit (Kelloway, 1998: 23-39; Diamantopoulos & Siguaw, 2000: 82-88; Tsoukatos & Rand, 2006). Finally, the comparative fit index (CFI) value exceeding 0,90 is an indication of good fit (Kelloway, 1998: 23-39; Diamantopoulos & Siguaw, 2000: 82-88; Tsoukatos & Rand, 2006). Overall, larger numbers of fit indices (closer to 1) are better, since they indicate a good model fit (Kline, 2005; Tsoukatos & Rand, 2006; Hair, Anderson,





Babin & Black, 2010; Ramkissoon et al., 2013). However, the RMSEA's value of less than 0,08 indicates an adequate fit for the model (Kline, 2005; Reisinger & Mavondo, 2006), as the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) denotes *“how well would the model, with unknown but optimally chosen parameter values, fit the population covariance matrix if it were available”* (Browne & Cudeck, 1993: 137–138). Moreover, the standardized root mean square residual (RMR) is a summary index of the standardized residuals and a value below 0,05 is considered as indicating acceptable fit (Tsoukatos & Rand, 2006).

#### 5.4.1.1. CONFIRMATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS (CFA)

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*“Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) is a type of structural equation modeling that deals specifically with measurement models; that is, the relationships between observed measures or indicators and latent variables or factors”* (Brown & Moore, 2012: 2). The aim of factor analysis is to determine the number and nature of factors that account for the covariation as well as the variation among a set of indicators (Brown & Moore, 2012). *“A factor is an unobservable variable that influences more than one observed measure and which accounts for the correlations among these observed measures”* (Brown & Moore, 2012: 2). This research employs Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), since the researcher has already specified the number of factors and the pattern of indicator-factor loadings in advance (study 1 and study 2) as well as other parameters such as those bearing on the independence or covariance of the factors and indicator unique variances (Brown & Moore, 2012). On the other hand, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) is not used in this study as it *“is a datadriven approach such that no specifications are made in regard to the number of common factors (initially) or the pattern of relationships between the common factors and the indicators (i.e., the factor loadings)”* (Brown & Moore, 2012: 2). After all, one of the main objectives of this study is the measurement scale development of destination love and CFA *“is almost always used in the process of scale development to examine the latent structure of a test instrument”* (Brown & Moore, 2012: 3). Furthermore, CFA is an essential analytic tool, which can provide compelling evidence of construct, convergent and discriminant validity of theoretical constructs (Kline, 2005; Brown & Moore, 2012).



### 5.4.1.2.RESULTS OF CFA

The initial sample size of this research is 1.008 participants but for all the following analyses the sample size is N=923, since participants who did not have at least one favorite/preferable destination for vacations were excluded. The advantage of using AMOS is that an overall model fit is produced as well as modification indices for suggested model improvements (Hart & Rosenberger, 2004). Thus, the initial theoretical first-order structural models were further purified based on the modification indices. Finally, all the purified first-order models estimated and provided good fit to the data (e.g., Kelloway, 1998; Diamantopoulos & Siguaw, 2000; Kline, 2005, 2016). The quantitative purification procedure resulted in retaining 54 items from the 81 initially submitted to the analysis. The following paragraphs provide details of the model fit statistics and purification.

#### 5.4.1.2.1. SELF-LOVE

The assessment of the initial theoretical self-love proposed model with 13 items reveals that the model does not fit the data well, from both descriptive (fit indices) and statistical point of view. Table 26 shows the overall model fit indices:

Table 26: Model Fit/ Goodness of fit measures for the self-love model (N=923)

CFA MODEL	CMIN	P-value	AGFI	RMSEA	GFI	RMR	NFI	TLI	CFI	AIC	BIC
Self-love	772,277	0,000	0,823	0,109	0,874	0,099	0,905	0,895	0,912	824,277	825,078

GFI, goodness-of-fit index; RMSEA, root-mean-square error of approximation; RMR, standardized root mean square residual; AGFI, adjusted goodness-of-fit; NFI, Normed fit index; TLI, Tucker-Lewis index; CFI, comparative fit index; AIC, Akaike Information Criterion; BIC, Bayesian Information Criterion

Probability level equals zero, and thus from a statistical point of view, the model is rejected at both 5% and 1% levels. From a descriptive point of view, the self-love model with 13 items does not fit the data well and it could be modified and improved.





Apart from the computation of modifications indices, a visual inspection of the matrix of standardized residuals and the Regression weights table was done in order to modify and simplify the self-love model. Based on these modification “strategies”, as well as on theory, self-love model was modified by coming up with three self-love sub-factors that compose self-love. The two revised factors of self-love are acceptable at both 5% and 1% probability level and one of them at 1% probability level and all three sub-factors fit the data well. Table 27 depicts the models fit indices of the self-love sub-factors:

Table 27: Model Fit/ Goodness of fit measures for the self-love revised models

(N=923)

CFA MODELS	CMIN	P-value	AGFI	RMSEA	GFI	RMR	NFI	TLI	CFI	AIC	BIC
Self-love 1	8,244	0,143	0,989	0,027	0,996	0,023	0,996	0,997	0,998	28,244	76,520
Self-love 2	14,091	0,015	0,982	0,044	0,994	0,033	0,092	0,989	0,994	34,091	82,367
Self-love 3	5,439	0,066	0,985	0,043	0,997	0,030	0,995	0,991	0,997	21,439	60,060

GFI, goodness-of-fit index; RMSEA, root-mean-square error of approximation; RMR, standardized root mean square residual; AGFI, adjusted goodness-of-fit; NFI, Normed fit index; TLI, Tucker-Lewis index; CFI, comparative fit index; AIC, Akaike Information Criterion; BIC, Bayesian Information Criterion

The three sub-factor models of self-love factor are acceptable from a statistical point of view at 1% probability level and two of them (self-love1, self-love 3) at both 1% and 5% probability level. From a descriptive point of view, the goodness of fit indices as well as the AGFI and the TLI indices are acceptable (the AGFI differs from the GFI-goodness of fit index- only in the fact that it adjusts for the number of degrees of freedom in the specified model), and also the Root Mean Square Error Approximation (badness of fit index) is acceptable and supports the admissible solution of the sub-factor models. Moreover, the confidence interval for RMSEA (LO90, HI90) contains the value of 0.06 for all sub-models, so the models are acceptable. The AIC (Akaike Information Criterion) values are much smaller in the sub-factor models than in the theoretical proposed self-love model. Hence, according to fit indices, the revised sub-



factor models are way much better than the theoretical one and fit the data well (Kelloway, 1998; Diamantopoulos & Siguaw, 2000; Kline, 2005; Tsoukatos & Rand, 2006; Reisinger & Mavondo, 2006). Apart from the fit indices assessment, a post hoc test was conducted (sequential chi-square difference test (SCDT)) (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988) in order to investigate whether the revised sub-factor models are indeed better compared to the theoretical one. The analysis indicated that there is a statistically significant difference in chi-square value between the theoretical and the revised sub-factor models at both probability levels 1% and 5%. This means that the revised sub-factor models of self-love fit the data much better than the theoretical proposed one (one factor with 13 items). In addition, none of the standardized residuals of the models exceeded the absolute value of 2,58, which would indicate specification error (Sharma & Sharma, 1996).

### Maximum Likelihood Estimates

#### SELF-CONFIRMATION (SELF-LOVE 1)

Table 28 depicts the Regression Weights of the items in the self-confirmation factor, as well as the standard errors, the critical ratio values and the p-values.

Table 28: Regression Weights

	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P-value
Self-appreciation <--- Self-confirmation	1,234	,045	27,610	***
Self-definition <--- Self-confirmation	1,185	,042	27,987	***
Self-stimulation <--- Self-confirmation	,889	,040	21,999	***
Self-confidence <--- Self-confirmation	1,155	,046	25,055	***
Self-actualization <--- Self-confirmation	1,230	,048	25,475	***

\*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

Critical ratio values exceed the critical value of 2 -for 5% level- and 2,3 -for 1% level, and p-values < 0.001. Thus, all items load statistically significantly on the self-confirmation factor.



Table 29: Standardized Regression Weights

	Estimate
Self-appreciation <--- Self-confirmation	,797
Self-definition <--- Self-confirmation	,805
Self-stimulation <--- Self-confirmation	,675
Self-confidence <--- Self-confirmation	,744
Self-actualization <--- Self-confirmation	,753

Table 29 depicts the factor loadings of items that represent the strength of the linear relation between each factor and its associated items (Bollen, 1989; Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1999)

Table 30: Standardized Residual Covariances

	s113	s17	s16	s15	s14
Self-actualization (s113)	,000				
Self-confidence (s17)	,312	,000			
Self-stimulation (s16)	,556	-,207	,000		
Self-definition (s15)	-,386	-,219	,266	,000	
Self-appreciation (s14)	-,133	,098	-,561	,321	,000

None of the standardized residuals in the factor exceeded the absolute value of 2,58, which would indicate specification error (Sharma & Sharma, 1996).



SELF-FLOURISHING AND WELL-BEING (SELF-LOVE 2)

Table 31 depicts the Regression Weights of the items in the self-flourishing factor, as well as the standard errors, the critical ratio values and the p-values.

Table 31: Regression Weights

		Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P-value
Self-investment	<--- Self-flourishing/ Well being	,912	,043	21,345	***
Best version of me	<--- Self-flourishing/ Well being	1,058	,044	24,252	***
Understand the real values	<--- Self-flourishing/ Well being	1,133	,048	23,457	***
Self-balance	<--- Self-flourishing/ Well being	1,212	,044	27,754	***
Way of thinking	<--- Self-flourishing/ Well being	,946	,048	19,593	***

\*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

Critical ratio values exceed the critical value of 2 -for 5% level- and 2,3 -for 1% level, and p-values < 0.001. Thus, all items load statistically significantly on the well-being factor.

Table 32: Standardized Regression Weights

		Estimate
Self-investment	<--- Self-flourishing/ Well being	,669
Best version of me	<--- Self-flourishing/ Well being	,737
Understand the real values	<--- Self-flourishing/ Well being	,719
Self-balance	<--- Self-flourishing/ Well being	,814
Way of thinking	<--- Self-flourishing/ Well being	,625

Table 32 depicts the Factor loadings of items that represent the strength of the linear relation between each factor and its associated items (Bollen, 1989; Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1999).

Table 33: Standardized Residual Covariances

	sexp1	s112	s19	s13	s110
Way of thinking (sexp1)	,000				
Self-balance (s112)	,261	,000			
Understand the real values (s19)	-,415	-,484	,000		
Best version of me (s13)	,338	-,093	,659	,000	
Self-investment (s110)	-,480	,515	,459	-,911	,000

None of the standardized residuals in the factor exceeded the absolute value of 2,58, which would indicate specification error (Sharma & Sharma, 1996).

## SELF-TRANSFORMATION (SELF-LOVE 3)

Table 34 depicts the Regression Weights of the items in the self-transformation factor, as well as the standard errors, the critical ratio values and the p-values.

Table 34: Regression Weights

		Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P-value
Self-discovery	<--- Self-transformation	1,335	,051	25,949	***
Self-fulfillment	<--- Self-transformation	,843	,044	19,290	***
Self-awareness	<--- Self-transformation	1,279	,050	25,743	***
Broaden my competences	<--- Self-transformation	1,087	,054	20,037	***

\*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

Critical ratio values exceed the critical value of 2 -for 5% level- and 2,3 -for 1% level and p-values < 0.001. Thus, all items load statistically significantly on the self-transformation factor.



Table 35: Standardized Regression Weights

		Estimate
Self-discovery	<--- Self-transformation	,796
Self-fulfillment	<--- Self-transformation	,626
Self-awareness	<--- Self-transformation	,791
Broaden my competences	<--- Self-transformation	,645

Table 35 depicts the Factor loadings that represent the strength of the linear relation between each factor and its associated items (Bollen, 1989; Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1999).

Table 36: Standardized Residual Covariances

	sexp2	sl8	sl11	sl2
Broaden my competences (sexp2)	,000			
Self-awareness (sl8)	-,168	,000		
Self-fulfillment (sl11)	-,737	,554	,000	
Self-discovery (sl2)	,497	-,166	-,177	,000

None of the standardized residuals in the factor exceeded the absolute value of 2,58, which would indicate specification error (Sharma & Sharma, 1996).



5.4.1.2.2. LOVE STEMMING FROM THE PEOPLE/LOCALS OF THE PLACE

The CFA assessment of the initial theoretical interpersonal love proposed model with 11 items reveals that the model does not fit the data well, from both descriptive (fit indices) and statistical point of view. Table 37 shows the overall model fit indices:

Table 37: Model Fit/ Goodness of fit measures for the love stemming from the locals model (N=923)

CFA MODEL	CMIN	P-value	AGFI	RMSEA	GFI	RMR	NFI	TLI	CFI	AIC	BIC
Love from people	1275,587	0,000	0,618	0,174	0,745	0,122	0,829	0,793	0,834	1319,587	1425,795

GFI, goodness-of-fit index; RMSEA, root-mean-square error of approximation; RMR, standardized root mean square residual; AGFI, adjusted goodness-of-fit; NFI, Normed fit index; TLI, Tucker-Lewis index; CFI, comparative fit index; AIC, Akaike Information Criterion; BIC, Bayesian Information Criterion

The theoretical love stemming from the locals model is rejected both statistically and descriptively. More specifically, probability level equals zero, and thus from a statistical point of view, the model is rejected at both 5% and 1% levels. From a descriptive point of view, the interpersonal love model (one factor) with 11 items does not fit the data well and it could be modified and improved. The modification procedure was analogous to that of self-love procedure (based on both theory and statistics). An optimal solution was emerged with two sub-factors of love stemming from locals (IL). The two revised factors of interpersonal love are acceptable at both 5% and 1% probability level and fit the data well.

Table 38 depicts the models fit indices of the love stemming from locals sub-factors.



Table 38: Model Fit/ Goodness of fit measures for the love stemming from the locals revised (anthropomorphism & emotional solidarity) models (N=923)

CFA MODELS	CMIN	P-value	AGFI	RMSEA	GFI	RMR	NFI	TLI	CFI	AIC	BIC
Anthropomorphism	1,266	0,531	0,997	0,000	0,999	0,005	0,999	1,001	1	17,266	55,887
Emotional solidarity	0,261	0,878	0,999	0,000	1	0,003	1	1,002	1	16,261	54,882

GFI, goodness-of-fit index; RMSEA, root-mean-square error of approximation; RMR, standardized root mean square residual; AGFI, adjusted goodness-of-fit; NFI, Normed fit index; TLI, Tucker-Lewis index; CFI, comparative fit index; AIC, Akaike Information Criterion; BIC, Bayesian Information Criterion

The two sub-factor models of love stemming from the locals factor are acceptable from a statistical point of view at both 1% and 5% probability level. From a descriptive point of view, the goodness of fit indices as well as the AGFI and the TLI indices are acceptable, and also the Root Mean Square Error Approximation is acceptable and supports the admissible solution of both sub-factor models. The AIC (Akaike Information Criterion) values are much smaller in the sub-factor models than in the theoretical proposed interpersonal love model. Hence, according to fit indices, the revised sub-factor models are way much better than the theoretical one and fit almost perfectly the data (Kelloway, 1998; Diamantopoulos & Siguaw, 2000; Kline, 2005; Tsoukatos & Rand, 2006; Reisinger & Mavondo, 2006). Apart from the fit indices assessment, a post hoc test was also conducted (sequential chi-square difference test (SCDT)) (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988) in order to investigate whether the revised sub-factor models are indeed better compared to the theoretical one. The analysis indicated that there is a statistically significant difference in chi-square value between the theoretical and each of the revised sub-factor models at both probability levels 1% and 5%. This means that the revised sub-factor models of love stemming from the locals fit the data much better than the theoretical proposed one (with 11 items). In addition, none of the standardized residuals of the models exceeded the absolute value of 2,58, which would indicate specification error (Sharma & Sharma, 1996).



## Maximum Likelihood Estimates

### 5.4.1.2.2.1.ANTHROPOMORPHISM

Table 39 depicts the Regression Weights of the items in the anthropomorphism factor, as well as the standard errors, the critical ratio values and the p-values.

Table 39: Regression Weights

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P-value
Feel welcomed	<---	anthropomorphism	,878	,034	26,194	***
Locals are very kind towards me	<---	anthropomorphism	,905	,031	29,549	***
Hospitality is great	<---	anthropomorphism	,950	,031	30,182	***
Locals are friendly towards me	<---	anthropomorphism	,952	,031	30,291	***

\*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

Critical ratio values (which are exactly the same with the z-values), exceed the critical value of 2 -for 5% level- and 2,3 -for 1% level-, and p-values  $< 0.001$ . Thus, all items load statistically significantly on the anthropomorphism factor.

Table 40: Standardized Regression Weights

			Estimate
Feel welcomed	<---	anthropomorphism	,762
Locals are very kind towards me	<---	anthropomorphism	,827
Hospitality is great	<---	anthropomorphism	,839
Locals are very friendly towards me	<---	anthropomorphism	,841

Table 40 depicts the factor loadings that represent the strength of the linear relation between each factor and its associated items (Bollen, 1989; Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1999).

Table 41: Standardized Residual Covariances

	p110	p18	p17	p12
Locals are very friendly towards me (p110)	,000			
Hospitality is great (p18)	,122	,000		
Locals are very kind towards me (p17)	-,024	-,110	,000	
Feel welcomed (p12)	-,161	-,036	,217	,000

None of the standardized residuals in the factor exceeded the absolute value of 2,58, which would indicate specification error (Sharma & Sharma, 1996).

#### 5.4.1.2.2.EMOTIONAL SOLIDARITY

Table 42 depicts the Regression Weights of the items in the emotional solidarity with locals factor, as well as the standard errors, the critical ratio values and the p-values.

Table 42: Regression Weights

		Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P-value
Feel strong connection with locals	<--- emotional solidarity	1,247	,038	32,448	***
Feel strong affinity towards locals	<--- emotional solidarity	1,371	,040	33,899	***
Share the same values with locals	<--- emotional solidarity	1,139	,040	28,215	***
Love locals	<--- emotional solidarity	1,071	,039	27,763	***

\*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

Critical ratio values (which are exactly the same with the z-values), exceed the critical value of 2 -for 5% level- and 2,3 -for 1% level-, and p-values < 0.001. Thus, all items load statistically significantly on the emotional solidarity with locals factor.



Table 43: Standardized Regression Weights

	Estimate
Feel strong connection with locals <--- emotional solidarity	,872
Feel strong affinity towards locals <--- emotional solidarity	,896
Share the same values with locals <--- emotional solidarity	,795
Love locals <--- emotional solidarity	,786

Table 43 depicts the factor loadings that represent the strength of the linear relation between each factor and its associated items (Bollen, 1989; Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1999)

Table 44: Standardized Residual Covariances

	p11	p16	p15	p14
Love locals (p11)	,000			
Share the same values with locals (p16)	-,113	,000		
Feel strong affinity towards the locals (p15)	,003	,047	,000	
Feel strong connection with locals (p14)	,062	,003	-,028	,000

None of the standardized residuals in the factor exceeded the absolute value of 2,58, which would indicate specification error (Sharma & Sharma, 1996).



5.4.1.2.3.PASSIONATE-ROMATIC DRIVEN BEHAVIOR

The CFA assessment of the initial theoretical passionate-romantic driven love proposed model with 6 items reveals that the model does not fit the data well, from both descriptive (fit indices) and statistical point of view. Table 45 shows the overall model fit indices:

Table 45 Model Fit/ Goodness of fit measures for the passionate/romantic driven behavior model (N=923)

CFA MODEL	CMIN	P-value	AGFI	RMSEA	GFI	RMR	NFI	TLI	CFI	AIC	BIC
Passionate/romantic driven behavior	137,894	0,000	0,889	0,125	0,953	0,125	0,954	0,928	0,957	161,894	219,826

GFI, goodness-of-fit index; RMSEA, root-mean-square error of approximation; RMR, standardized root mean square residual; AGFI, adjusted goodness-of-fit; NFI, Normed fit index; TLI, Tucker-Lewis index; CFI, comparative fit index; AIC, Akaike Information Criterion; BIC, Bayesian Information Criterion

The theoretical passionate-romantic driven behavior model is rejected both statistically and descriptively. More specifically, probability level equals zero, and thus from a statistical point of view, the model is rejected at both 5% and 1% levels. From a descriptive point of view, the passionate-romantic driven behavior model (one factor) with 6 items does not fit the data well and it could be modified and improved. The modification procedure was analogous to that of self-love and interpersonal love procedure (based on both theory and statistics). An optimal solution was emerged with one factor comprising of 4 items instead of 6. The revised factor of passionate-romantic driven behavior is acceptable at 1% probability level and fits the data well. Table 46 depicts the models fit indices of the passionate-romantic driven behavior factor.



Table 46: Model Fit/ Goodness of fit measures for the passionate/romantic driven behavior revised model (N=923)

CFA MODEL	CMIN	P-value	AGFI	RMSEA	GFI	RMR	NFI	TLI	CFI	AIC	BIC
Passionate/romantic driven behavior	7,272	0,026	0,981	0,053	0,996	0,025	0,996	0,990	0,997	23,272	61,893

GFI, goodness-of-fit index; RMSEA, root-mean-square error of approximation; RMR, standardized root mean square residual; AGFI, adjusted goodness-of-fit; NFI, Normed fit index; TLI, Tucker-Lewis index; CFI, comparative fit index; AIC, Akaike Information Criterion; BIC, Bayesian Information Criterion

The modified factor of passionate/romantic driven behavior is acceptable from a statistical point of view at 1% probability level. From a descriptive point of view, the goodness of fit indices as well as the AGFI and the TLI indices are acceptable, and also the Root Mean Square Error Approximation is acceptable and supports the admissible solution of the modified model. The AIC (Akaike Information Criterion) values are much smaller in the modified model than in the theoretical proposed model. Hence, according to fit indices, the revised model is way much better than the theoretical one and fit well the data (Kelloway, 1998; Diamantopoulos & Siguaaw, 2000; Kline, 2005; Tsoukatos & Rand, 2006; Reisinger & Mavondo, 2006). Apart from the fit indices assessment, a post hoc test was also conducted (sequential chi-square difference test (SCDT)) (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988) in order to investigate whether the revised model is indeed better compared to the theoretical one. The analysis indicated that there is a statistically significant difference in chi-square value between the theoretical and revised model at both probability levels 1% and 5%. This means that the revised model (with 4 items) fits the data much better than the theoretical proposed one (with 6 items). In addition, none of the standardized residuals in the model exceeded the absolute value of 2,58, which would indicate specification error (Sharma & Sharma, 1996).



### Maximum Likelihood Estimates

Table 47 depicts the Regression Weights of the items in the passion/romantic driven behavior towards the most favorite destination factor, as well as the standard errors, the critical ratio values and the p-values.

Table 47: Regression Weights

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
Feel passionate about this place	<---	passionate/romantic driven behavior	1,170	,037	31,918	***
Feel a sense of longing to visit this place	<---	passionate/romantic driven behavior	1,298	,041	31,880	***
Feel attracted by this place	<---	passionate/romantic driven behavior	,844	,034	24,488	***
This place triggers my romantic feelings	<---	passionate/romantic driven behavior	,828	,054	15,426	***

\*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

Critical ratio values (which are exactly the same with the z-values), exceed the critical value of 2 -for 5% level- and 2,3 -for 1% level-, and p-values < 0.001. Thus, all items load statistically significantly on the passionate/romantic driven behavior factor.

Table 48: Standardized Regression Weights

			Estimate
Feel passionate about this place	<---	passionate/romantic driven behavior	,882
Feel a sense of longing to visit this place	<---	passionate/romantic driven behavior	,881
Feel attracted by this place	<---	passionate/romantic driven behavior	,726
This place triggers my romantic feelings	<---	passionate/romantic driven behavior	,501



Table 48 depicts the factor loadings that represent the strength of the linear relation between each factor and its associated items (Bollen, 1989; Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1999).

Table 49: Standardized Residual Covariances

	ps6	ps4	ps3	ps2
This place triggers my romantic feelings (ps6)	,000			
Feel attracted by this place (ps4)	,576	,000		
Feel a sense of longing to visit this place (ps3)	,448	-,267	,000	
Feel passionate about this place (ps2)	-,663	,178	,032	,000

None of the standardized residuals in the factor exceeded the absolute value of 2,58, which would indicate specification error (Sharma & Sharma, 1996).

#### 5.4.1.2.4. NOSTALGIA & FREQUENT THOUGHTS

The CFA assessment of the initial theoretical nostalgia & frequent thoughts proposed model with 8 items reveals that the model does not fit the data well, from both descriptive (fit indices) and statistical point of view. Table 50 shows the overall model fit indices:

Table 50: Model Fit/ Goodness of fit measures for the nostalgia & frequent thoughts model (N=923)

CFA MODEL	CMIN	P-value	AGFI	RMSEA	GFI	RMR	NFI	TLI	CFI	AIC	BIC
Nostalgia & frequent thoughts	773,118	0,000	0,596	0,202	0,775	0,209	0,845	0,778	0,848	805,118	882,360

GFI, goodness-of-fit index; RMSEA, root-mean-square error of approximation; RMR, standardized root mean square residual; AGFI, adjusted goodness-of-fit; NFI, Normed fit index; TLI, Tucker-Lewis index; CFI, comparative fit index; AIC, Akaike Information Criterion; BIC, Bayesian Information Criterion

The theoretical nostalgia/frequent thoughts model is rejected both statistically and descriptively. More specifically, probability level equals zero, and thus from a statistical point of view, the model is rejected at both 5% and 1% levels. From a



descriptive point of view, the nostalgia model (one factor) with 8 items does not fit the data well and it could be modified and improved. The modification procedure was analogous to that of self-love, interpersonal love and passionate/romantic driven behavior procedure (based on both theory and statistics). An optimal solution was emerged with one factor comprising of 4 items instead of 8. The revised factor of nostalgia is acceptable at both 1% and 5% probability level and fits the data almost perfectly. Table 51 depicts the models fit indices of nostalgia factor:

Table 51: Model Fit/ Goodness of fit measures for the nostalgia & frequent thoughts revised model (N=923)

CFA MODEL	CMIN	P-value	AGFI	RMSEA	GFI	RMR	NFI	TLI	CFI	AIC	BIC
Nostalgia & frequent thoughts	2,008	0,366	0,995	0,002	0,999	0,019	0,999	1	1	18,008	56,629

GFI, goodness-of-fit index; RMSEA, root-mean-square error of approximation; RMR, standardized root mean square residual; AGFI, adjusted goodness-of-fit; NFI, Normed fit index; TLI, Tucker-Lewis index; CFI, comparative fit index; AIC, Akaike Information Criterion; BIC, Bayesian Information Criterion

The modified factor of nostalgia is acceptable from a statistical point of view at 1% and 5% probability level. From a descriptive point of view, the goodness of fit indices as well as the AGFI and the TLI indices are acceptable, and also the Root Mean Square Error Approximation is acceptable and supports the admissible solution of the modified model. The AIC (Akaike Information Criterion) values are much smaller in the modified model than in the theoretical proposed model. Hence, according to fit indices, the revised model is way much better than the theoretical one and fits almost perfectly the data (Kelloway, 1998; Diamantopoulos & Sigauw, 2000; Kline, 2005; Tsoukatos & Rand, 2006; Reisinger & Mavondo, 2006). Apart from the fit indices assessment, a post hoc test was also conducted (sequential chi-square difference test (SCDT)) (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988) in order to investigate whether the revised model is indeed better compared to the theoretical one. The analysis indicated that there is a statistically significant difference in chi-square value between the theoretical





and revised model at both probability levels 1% and 5%. This means that the revised model (with 4 items) fits the data much better than the theoretical proposed one (with 8 items). In addition, none of the standardized residuals in the model exceeded the absolute value of 2,58, which would indicate specification error (Sharma & Sharma, 1996).

### Maximum Likelihood Estimates

Table 52 depicts the Regression Weights of the items in the nostalgia factor, as well as the standard errors, the critical ratio values and the p-values.

Table 52: Regression Weights

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P-value
Feel nostalgic about this place	<---	Nostalgia/frequent thoughts	1,250	,045	27,710	***
Miss this place often	<---	Nostalgia/frequent thoughts	1,420	,046	30,829	***
If I could never visit this place again, I would feel miserable	<---	Nostalgia/frequent thoughts	1,105	,056	19,744	***
I frequently find myself thinking about this place	<---	Nostalgia/frequent thoughts	1,075	,046	23,222	***

\*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

Critical ratio values (which are exactly the same with the z-values), exceed the critical value of 2 -for 5% level- and 2,3 -for 1% level-, and p-values < 0.001. Thus, all items load statistically significantly on the nostalgia factor.



Table 53: Standardized Regression Weights

			Estimate
Feel nostalgic about this place	<---	Nostalgia/frequent thoughts	,808
Miss this place often	<---	Nostalgia/frequent thoughts	,874
If I could never visit this place again, I would feel miserable	<---	Nostalgia/frequent thoughts	,623
I frequently find myself thinking about this place	<---	Nostalgia/frequent thoughts	,707

Table 53 depicts the factor loadings that represent the strength of the linear relation between each factor and its associated items (Bollen, 1989; Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1999)

Table 54: Standardized Residual Covariances

	ft1	ps5	ns2	ns1
I frequently find myself thinking about this place (ft1)	,000			
If I could never visit this place again, I would feel miserable (ps5)	,425	,000		
Miss this place often (ns2)	-,160	,073	,000	
Feel nostalgic about this place (ns1)	,083	-,370	,063	,000

None of the standardized residuals in the factor exceeded the absolute value of 2,58, which would indicate specification error (Sharma & Sharma, 1996).



5.4.1.2.5. POSITIVE EMOTIONAL CONNECTION

5.4.1.2.5.1. POSITIVE EMOTIONS/PSYCHOLOGICAL STATES

The CFA assessment of the initial theoretical positive emotions/psychological states proposed model with 6 items reveals that the model does not fit the data well, from both descriptive (fit indices) and statistical point of view. Table 55 shows the overall model fit indices:

Table 55: Model Fit/ Goodness of fit measures for the positive emotions/psychological states model (N=923)

CFA MODEL	CMIN	P-value	AGFI	RMSEA	GFI	RMR	NFI	TLI	CFI	AIC	BIC
Positive psychological states	408,585	0,000	0,694	0,219	0,891	0,083	0,889	0,819	0,891	432,585	490,516

GFI, goodness-of-fit index; RMSEA, root-mean-square error of approximation; RMR, standardized root mean square residual; AGFI, adjusted goodness-of-fit; NFI, Normed fit index; TLI, Tucker-Lewis index; CFI, comparative fit index; AIC, Akaike Information Criterion; BIC, Bayesian Information Criterion

The theoretical positive emotions/ psychological states model is rejected both statistically and descriptively. More specifically, probability level equals zero, and thus from a statistical point of view, the model is rejected at both 5% and 1% levels. From a descriptive point of view, the model (one factor) with 6 items does not fit the data well and it could be modified and improved. The modification procedure was analogous to that of self-love, nostalgia, interpersonal love and passionate/romantic driven behavior procedure (based on both theory and statistics). An optimal solution was emerged with one factor comprising of 4 items instead of 6. The revised factor of positive psychological states is acceptable at both 1% and 5% probability level and fits the data well. Table 56 depicts the models fit indices of positive psychological states factor:



Table 56: Model Fit/ Goodness of fit measures for the positive psychological states revised model (N=923)

CFA MODEL	CMIN	P-value	AGFI	RMSEA	GFI	RMR	NFI	TLI	CFI	AIC	BIC
Positive psychological states	1,905	0,386	0,995	0,000	0,999	0,007	0,999	1	1	17,905	56,526

GFI, goodness-of-fit index; RMSEA, root-mean-square error of approximation; RMR, standardized root mean square residual; AGFI, adjusted goodness-of-fit; NFI, Normed fit index; TLI, Tucker-Lewis index; CFI, comparative fit index; AIC, Akaike Information Criterion; BIC, Bayesian Information Criterion

The modified factor of positive emotions/ psychological states is acceptable from a statistical point of view at 1% and 5% probability level. From a descriptive point of view, the goodness of fit indices as well as the AGFI and the TLI indices are acceptable, and also the Root Mean Square Error Approximation is acceptable and supports the admissible solution of the modified model. The AIC (Akaike Information Criterion) values are much smaller in the modified model than in the theoretical proposed model. Hence, according to fit indices, the revised model is way much better than the theoretical one and fits almost perfectly the data (Kelloway, 1998; Diamantopoulos & Sigauw, 2000; Kline, 2005; Tsoukatos & Rand, 2006; Reisinger & Mavondo, 2006). Apart from the fit indices assessment, a post hoc test was also conducted (sequential chi-square difference test (SCDT)) (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988) in order to investigate whether the revised model is indeed better compared to the theoretical one. The analysis indicated that there is a statistically significant difference in chi-square value between the theoretical and revised model at both probability levels 1% and 5%. This means that the revised model (with 4 items) fits the data much better than the theoretical proposed one (with 6 items). In addition, none of the standardized residuals in the model exceeded the absolute value of 2,58, which would indicate specification error (Sharma & Sharma, 1996).



### Maximum Likelihood Estimates

Table 57 depicts the Regression Weights of the items in the positive psychological states factor, as well as the standard errors, the critical ratio values and the p-values.

Table 57: Regression Weights

		Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P-value
Feel happy	<--- Positive psychological states	,725	,026	28,076	***
Feel amazed	<--- Positive psychological states	,903	,036	25,276	***
Feel harmony	<--- Positive psychological states	,952	,029	32,703	***
Feel safe	<--- Positive psychological states	,810	,041	19,892	***

\*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

Critical ratio values (which are exactly the same with the z-values), exceed the critical value of 2 -for 5% level- and 2,3 -for 1% level-, and p-values < 0.001. Thus, all items load statistically significantly on the positive psychological states factor.

Table 58: Standardized Regression Weights

		Estimate
Feel happy	<--- Positive psychological state	,807
Feel amazed	<--- Positive psychological state	,747
Feel harmony	<--- Positive psychological state	,898
Feel safe	<--- Positive psychological state	,621

Table 58 depicts the factor loadings that represent the strength of the linear relation between each factor and its associated items (Bollen, 1989; Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1999).



Table 59: Standardized Residual Covariances

	Feel safe	Feel harmony	Feel amazed	Feel happy
Feel safe (πα6)	,000			
Feel harmony	,158	,000		
Feel amazed	,123	-,114	,000	
Feel happy	-,414	,017	,187	,000

None of the standardized residuals in the factor exceeded the absolute value of 2,58, which would indicate specification error (Sharma & Sharma, 1996).

#### 5.4.1.2.5.2. EMOTIONAL ATTACHMENT

The CFA assessment of the initial theoretical emotional attachment proposed model with 6 items reveals that the model does not fit the data well, from both descriptive (fit indices) and statistical point of view. Table 60 shows the overall model fit indices:

Table 60: Model Fit/ Goodness of fit measures for the emotional attachment model (N=923)

CFA MODEL	CMIN	P-value	AGFI	RMSEA	GFI	RMR	NFI	TLI	CFI	AIC	BIC
Emotional attachment	538,744	0,000	0,577	0,253	0,819	0,177	0,865	0,777	0,866	562,744	620,676

GFI, goodness-of-fit index; RMSEA, root-mean-square error of approximation; RMR, standardized root mean square residual; AGFI, adjusted goodness-of-fit; NFI, Normed fit index; TLI, Tucker-Lewis index; CFI, comparative fit index; AIC, Akaike Information Criterion; BIC, Bayesian Information Criterion

The theoretical emotional attachment proposed model is rejected both statistically and descriptively. More specifically, probability level equals zero, and thus from a statistical point of view, the model is rejected at both 5% and 1% levels. From a descriptive point of view, the model (one factor) with 6 items does not fit the data well and it could be modified and improved. The modification procedure was analogous to that of self-love, nostalgia, positive psychological states, interpersonal love and passionate/romantic driven behavior procedure. An optimal solution was emerged with one factor comprising of 4 items instead of 6. The revised factor of



emotional attachment is acceptable at both 1% and 5% probability level and fits the data well. Table 61 depicts the models fit indices of emotional attachment factor:

Table 61: Model Fit/ Goodness of fit measures for the emotional attachment revised model (N=923)

CFA MODEL	CMIN	P-value	AGFI	RMSEA	GFI	RMR	NFI	TLI	CFI	AIC	BIC
Emotional attachment	4,905	0,086	0,987	0,040	0,997	0,020	0,997	0,995	0,998	20,905	59,526

GFI, goodness-of-fit index; RMSEA, root-mean-square error of approximation; RMR, standardized root mean square residual; AGFI, adjusted goodness-of-fit; NFI, Normed fit index; TLI, Tucker-Lewis index; CFI, comparative fit index; AIC, Akaike Information Criterion; BIC, Bayesian Information Criterion

The modified factor of emotional attachment is acceptable from a statistical point of view at 1% and 5% probability level. From a descriptive point of view, the goodness of fit indices as well as the AGFI and the TLI indices are acceptable, and also the Root Mean Square Error Approximation is acceptable and supports the admissible solution of the modified model. The AIC (Akaike Information Criterion) values are much smaller in the modified model than in the theoretical proposed model. Hence, according to fit indices, the revised model is way much better than the theoretical one and fits the data well (Kelloway, 1998; Diamantopoulos & Sigauw, 2000; Kline, 2005; Tsoukatos & Rand, 2006; Reisinger & Mavondo, 2006). Apart from the fit indices assessment, a post hoc test was also conducted (sequential chi-square difference test (SCDT)) (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988) in order to investigate whether the revised model is indeed better compared to the theoretical one. The analysis indicated that there is a statistically significant difference in chi-square value between the theoretical and revised model at both probability levels 1% and 5%. This means that the revised model (with 4 items) fits the data much better than the theoretical proposed one (with 6 items). In addition, none of the standardized residuals in the model exceeded the absolute value of 2,58, which would indicate specification error (Sharma & Sharma, 1996).



### Maximum Likelihood Estimates

Table 62 depicts the Regression Weights of the items in the emotional attachment factor, as well as the standard errors, the critical ratio values and the p-values.

Table 62: Regression Weights

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
I feel emotionally attached to this place	<---	Emotional attachment	1,077	,046	23,519	***
No other place can provide the same holiday experience as this destination	<---	Emotional attachment	1,358	,045	29,862	***
I would not substitute this place for any other place	<---	Emotional attachment	1,467	,046	32,218	***
This destination is the best place for what I like to do during my holidays	<---	Emotional attachment	,943	,038	24,985	***

\*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

Critical ratio values (which are exactly the same with the z-values), exceed the critical value of 2 -for 5% level- and 2,3 -for 1% level-, and p-values < 0.001. Thus, all items load statistically significantly on the emotional attachment factor.

Table 63: Standardized Regression Weights

			Estimate
I feel emotionally attached to this place	<---	Emotional attachment	,706
No other place can provide the same holiday experience as this destination	<---	Emotional attachment	,838
I would not substitute this place for any other place	<---	Emotional attachment	,883
This destination is the best place for what I like to do during my holidays	<---	Emotional attachment	,738





Table 63 depicts the factor loadings that represent the strength of the linear relation between each factor and its associated items (Bollen, 1989; Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1999).

Table 64: Standardized Residual Covariances

	ema6	ema5	ema4	ema1
Best place for what I like to do (ema6)	,000			
Not substitute (ema5)	-,276	,000		
No other place can provide the same experience (ema4)	,230	,064	,000	
Emotionally attached (ema1)	,348	,187	-,463	,000

None of the standardized residuals in the factor exceeded the absolute value of 2,58, which would indicate specification error (Sharma & Sharma, 1996).

#### 5.4.1.2.5.3. NATURAL/INTUITIVE FIT

The CFA assessment of the initial theoretical intuitive fit proposed model with 9 items reveals that the model does not fit the data well, from both descriptive (fit indices) and statistical point of view. Table 65 shows the overall model fit indices:

Table 65: Model Fit/ Goodness of fit measures for the intuitive fit model (N=923)

CFA MODEL	CMIN	P-value	AGFI	RMSEA	GFI	RMR	NFI	TLI	CFI	AIC	BIC
Intuitive fit	617,783	0,000	0,775	0,154	0,865	0,101	0,877	0,842	0,881	653,783	740,680

GFI, goodness-of-fit index; RMSEA, root-mean-square error of approximation; RMR, standardized root mean square residual; AGFI, adjusted goodness-of-fit; NFI, Normed fit index; TLI, Tucker-Lewis index; CFI, comparative fit index; AIC, Akaike Information Criterion; BIC, Bayesian Information Criterion

The theoretical natural/intuitive fit proposed model is rejected both statistically and descriptively. More specifically, probability level equals zero, and thus from a statistical point of view, the model is rejected at both 5% and 1% levels. From a descriptive point of view, the model (one factor) with 9 items does not fit the data



well and it could be modified and improved. The modification procedure was analogous to that of self-love, emotional attachment, nostalgia, positive psychological state, interpersonal love and passionate/romantic driven behavior procedure. An optimal solution, based on both theory and statistics, was emerged with one factor composed of 4 items. The revised intuitive fit factor is acceptable at both 1% and 5% probability level and fits the data well. Table 66 depicts the models fit indices of intuitive fit factor:

Table 66: Model Fit/ Goodness of fit measures for the intuitive fit revised model (N=923)

CFA MODEL	CMIN	P-value	AGFI	RMSEA	GFI	RMR	NFI	TLI	CFI	AIC	BIC
Intuitive fit	0,239	0,887	0,999	0,000	1	0,003	1	1,003	1	16,239	54,860

GFI, goodness-of-fit index; RMSEA, root-mean-square error of approximation; RMR, standardized root mean square residual; AGFI, adjusted goodness-of-fit; NFI, Normed fit index; TLI, Tucker-Lewis index; CFI, comparative fit index; AIC, Akaike Information Criterion; BIC, Bayesian Information Criterion

The revised intuitive fit factor is acceptable from a statistical point of view at both 1% and 5% probability levels. From a descriptive point of view, the goodness of fit indices as well as the AGFI and the TLI indices are acceptable, and also the Root Mean Square Error Approximation is acceptable and supports the admissible solution of the revised model. The AIC (Akaike Information Criterion) values are much smaller in the revised model than in the theoretical proposed intuitive fit model. Hence, according to fit indices, the revised model is way much better than the theoretical one and fit almost perfectly the data (Kelloway, 1998; Diamantopoulos & Siguaw, 2000; Kline, 2005; Tsoukatos & Rand, 2006; Reisinger & Mavondo, 2006). Apart from the fit indices assessment, a post hoc test was also conducted (sequential chi-square difference test (SCDT)) (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988) in order to investigate whether the revised model is indeed better compared to the theoretical one. The analysis indicated that there is a statistically significant difference in chi-square value between the theoretical and the revised factor model at both probability levels 1% and 5%. This means that the revised model fits the data much better than the theoretical proposed one (with 9 items). In addition, none of the standardized residuals in the



model exceeded the absolute value of 2,58, which would indicate specification error (Sharma & Sharma, 1996).

### Maximum Likelihood Estimates

Table 67 depicts the Regression Weights of the items in the intuitive fit factor, as well as the standard errors, the critical ratio values and the p-values.

Table 67: Regression Weights

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P-value
Uniqueness of the place	<---	Intuitive fit	,962	,038	25,297	***
Feel psychologically comfortable in this place	<---	Intuitive fit	1,018	,038	27,044	***
This place meets my needs perfectly	<---	Intuitive fit	,999	,034	29,238	***
I do care about this place	<---	Intuitive fit	1,022	,038	26,861	***

\*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

Critical ratio values (which are exactly the same with the z-values), exceed the critical value of 2 -for 5% level- and 2,3 -for 1% level-, and p-values < 0.001. Thus, all items load statistically significantly on the intuitive fit factor.

Table 68: Standardized Regression Weights

			Estimate
Uniqueness of the place	<---	Intuitive fit	,751
Feel psychologically comfortable in this place	<---	Intuitive fit	,788
This place meets my needs perfectly	<---	Intuitive fit	,832
I do care about this place	<---	Intuitive fit	,784



Table 68 depicts the factor loadings that represent the strength of the linear relation between each factor and its associated items (Bollen, 1989; Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1999).

Table 69: Standardized Residual Covariances

	int7	int5	int4	int1
I do care about this pplace (int7)	,000			
This place meets my needs perfectly (int5)	,003	,000		
Feel psychologically comfortable in this place (int4)	-,083	,058	,000	
Uniqueness of the place (int1)	,096	-,075	,005	,000

None of the standardized residuals in the factor exceeded the absolute value of 2,58, which would indicate specification error (Sharma & Sharma, 1996).

#### 5.4.1.2.6. LONG-TERM RELATIONSHIP

The CFA assessment of the initial theoretical long term relationship proposed model with 6 items reveals that the model does not fit the data well, from both descriptive (fit indices) and statistical point of view. Table 70 shows the overall model fit indices:

Table 70: Model Fit/ Goodness of fit measures for the long-term relationship model (N=923)

CFA MODEL	CMIN	P-value	AGFI	RMSEA	GFI	RMR	NFI	TLI	CFI	AIC	BIC
Long-term relationship	417,342	0,000	0,642	0,222	0,847	0,140	0,904	0,843	0,906	441,342	499,274

GFI, goodness-of-fit index; RMSEA, root-mean-square error of approximation; RMR, standardized root mean square residual; AGFI, adjusted goodness-of-fit; NFI, Normed fit index; TLI, Tucker-Lewis index; CFI, comparative fit index; AIC, Akaike Information Criterion; BIC, Bayesian Information Criterion

The theoretical long term relationship model is rejected both statistically and descriptively. More specifically, probability level equals zero, and thus from a statistical point of view, the model is rejected at both 5% and 1% levels. From a



descriptive point of view, the long term relationship model (one factor) with 6 items does not fit the data well and it could be modified and improved. The modification procedure was analogous to that of self-love, nostalgia, intuitive fit, emotional attachment, positive emotions/psychological states, interpersonal love and passionate/romantic driven behavior procedure (based on both theory and statistics). An optimal solution was emerged with one factor comprising of 4 items instead of 6. The revised factor of long term relationship is acceptable at 1% probability level and fits the data almost perfectly. Table 71 depicts the models fit indices of long term relationship factor:

Table 71: Model Fit/ Goodness of fit measures for the long term relationship revised model (N=923)

CFA MODEL	CMIN	P-value	AGFI	RMSEA	GFI	RMR	NFI	TLI	CFI	AIC	BIC
Long-term relationship	6,087	0,048	0,983	0,047	0,998	0,021	0,997	0,995	0,998	22,087	60,708

GFI, goodness-of-fit index; RMSEA, root-mean-square error of approximation; RMR, standardized root mean square residual; AGFI, adjusted goodness-of-fit; NFI, Normed fit index; TLI, Tucker-Lewis index; CFI, comparative fit index; AIC, Akaike Information Criterion; BIC, Bayesian Information Criterion

The revised long term relationship factor is acceptable from a statistical point of view at 1% probability level. From a descriptive point of view, the goodness of fit indices as well as the AGFI and the TLI indices are acceptable, and also the Root Mean Square Error Approximation is acceptable and supports the admissible solution of revised model. The AIC (Akaike Information Criterion) values are much smaller in the revised model than in the theoretical proposed long term relationship model. Hence, according to fit indices, the revised model is way much better than the theoretical one and fits the data well (Kelloway, 1998; Diamantopoulos & Siguaw, 2000; Kline, 2005; Tsoukatos & Rand, 2006; Reisinger & Mavondo, 2006). Apart from the fit indices assessment, a post hoc test was also conducted (sequential chi-square difference test (SCDT)) (Anderson & Gerbing,1988) in order to investigate whether the revised model is indeed better compared to the theoretical one. The analysis indicated that there is a statistically significant difference in chi-square value between the theoretical and the revised factor model at both probability levels 1% and



5%. This means that the revised model (4 items) fits the data much better than the theoretical proposed one (with 6 items). In addition, none of the standardized residuals in the model exceeded the absolute value of 2,58, which would indicate specification error (Sharma & Sharma, 1996).

### Maximum Likelihood Estimates

Table 72 depicts the Regression Weights of the items in the long term relationship with the most favorite destination factor, as well as the standard errors, the critical ratio values and the p-values.

Table 72: Regression Weights

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P-value
I will visit this place the next time I go on vacations	<---	Long-term relationship	1,272	,043	29,685	***
I intend to keep visiting this place	<---	Long-term relationship	1,281	,038	33,451	***
I am a loyal visitor of this place	<---	Long-term relationship	1,383	,048	28,766	***
I expect that this place will be part of my life for a long time	<---	Long-term relationship	1,221	,043	28,699	***

\*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

Critical ratio values (which are exactly the same with the z-values), exceed the critical value of 2 -for 5% level- and 2,3 -for 1% level-, and p-values < 0.001. Thus, all items load statistically significantly on the long term relationship factor.



Table 73: Standardized Regression Weights

			Estimate
I will visit this place the next time I go on vacations	<---	Long-term relationship	,825
I intend to keep visiting this place	<---	Long-term relationship	,892
I am a loyal visitor of this place	<---	Long-term relationship	,808
I expect that this place will be part of my life for a long time	<---	Long-term relationship	,807

Table 73 depicts the factor loadings that represent the strength of the linear relation between each factor and its associated items (Bollen, 1989; Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1999)

Table 74: Standardized Residual Covariances

	lt2	loy3	loy2	loy1
I expect that this place will be part of my life for a long time (lt2)	,000			
I am a loyal visitor of this place (loy3)	,470	,000		
I intend to keep visiting this place (loy2)	-,199	-,044	,000	
I will visit this place the next time I go on vacations (loy1)	-,076	-,341	,216	,000

None of the standardized residuals in the factor exceeded the absolute value of 2,58, which would indicate specification error (Sharma & Sharma, 1996).



5.4.1.2.7. SELF-DESTINATION INTEGRATION

5.4.1.2.7.1. SELF-IDENTITY

The CFA assessment of the initial theoretical self-identity proposed model with 6 items reveals that the model does not fit the data well, from both descriptive (fit indexes) and statistical point of view. Table 75 shows the overall model fit indices:

Table 75: Model Fit/ Goodness of fit measures for the self-identity model (N=923)

CFA MODEL	CMIN	P-value	AGFI	RMSEA	GFI	RMR	NFI	TLI	CFI	AIC	BIC
Self-identity	726,754	0,000	0,389	0,294	0,800	0,219	0,798	0,666	0,800	750,754	808,686

GFI, goodness-of-fit index; RMSEA, root-mean-square error of approximation; RMR, standardized root mean square residual; AGFI, adjusted goodness-of-fit; NFI, Normed fit index; TLI, Tucker-Lewis index; CFI, comparative fit index; AIC, Akaike Information Criterion; BIC, Bayesian Information Criterion

The theoretical self-identity model is rejected both statistically and descriptively. More specifically, probability level equals zero, and thus from a statistical point of view, the model is rejected at both 5% and 1% levels. From a descriptive point of view, the self-identity model (one factor) with 6 items does not fit the data well and it could be modified and improved. The modification procedure was analogous to that of self-love, nostalgia, long term relationship, intuitive fit, emotional attachment, positive psychological states, love stemming from the locals and passionate/romantic driven behavior procedure (based on both theory and statistics). An optimal solution was emerged with one factor comprising of 4 items instead of 6. The revised factor of self-identity is acceptable at both 5% and 1% probability level and fits the data almost perfectly. Table 76 depicts the models fit indices of self-identity factor:





Table 76: Model Fit/ Goodness of fit measures for the self-identity revised model (N=923)

CFA MODEL	CMIN	P-value	AGFI	RMSEA	GFI	RMR	NFI	TLI	CFI	AIC	BIC
Self-identity	3,018	0,221	0,992	0,024	0,998	0,014	0,998	0,998	0,999	19,018	57,640

GFI, goodness-of-fit index; RMSEA, root-mean-square error of approximation; RMR, standardized root mean square residual; AGFI, adjusted goodness-of-fit; NFI, Normed fit index; TLI, Tucker-Lewis index; CFI, comparative fit index; AIC, Akaike Information Criterion; BIC, Bayesian Information Criterion

The revised self-identity factor is acceptable from a statistical point of view at both 5% and 1% probability level. From a descriptive point of view, the goodness of fit indices as well as the AGFI and the TLI indices are acceptable, and also the Root Mean Square Error Approximation is acceptable and supports the admissible solution of revised model. The AIC (Akaike Information Criterion) values are much smaller in the revised model than in the theoretical proposed self-identity model. Hence, according to fit indices, the revised model is way much better than the theoretical one and fits the data well (Kelloway, 1998; Diamantopoulos & Sigauw, 2000; Kline, 2005; Tsoukatos & Rand, 2006; Reisinger & Mavondo, 2006). Apart from the fit indices assessment, a post hoc test was also conducted (sequential chi-square difference test (SCDT)) (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988) in order to investigate whether the revised model is indeed better compared to the theoretical one. The analysis indicated that there is a statistically significant difference in chi-square value between the theoretical and the revised factor model at both probability levels 1% and 5%. This means that the revised model (4 items) fits the data much better than the theoretical proposed one (with 6 items). In addition, none of the standardized residuals in the model exceeded the absolute value of 2,58, which would indicate specification error (Sharma & Sharma, 1996).

### Maximum Likelihood Estimates

Table 77 depicts the Regression Weights of the items in the self-identity factor, as well as the standard errors, the critical ratio values and the p-values.

Table 77: Regression Weights

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P-value
This place present myself to others as the person I want to be	<---	Self-identity	1,112	,036	30,893	***
This place makes me look like I want to look	<---	Self-identity	1,218	,037	33,090	***
This place makes me feel like I want to feel	<---	Self-identity	1,037	,036	28,700	***
This place reflects myself	<---	Self-identity	1,014	,049	20,658	***

\*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

Critical ratio values (which are exactly the same with the z-values), exceed the critical value of 2 -for 5% level- and 2,3 -for 1% level-, and p-values < 0.001. Thus, all items load statistically significantly on the self-identity factor.

Table 78: Standardized Regression Weights

			Estimate
This place present myself to others as the person I want to be	<---	Self-identity	,851
This place makes me look like I want to look	<---	Self-identity	,891
This place makes me feel like I want to feel	<---	Self-identity	,809
This place reflects myself	<---	Self-identity	,636



Table 78 depicts the factor loadings that represent the strength of the linear relation between each factor and its associated items (Bollen, 1989; Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1999).

Table 79: Standardized Residual Covariances

	csi1	dsi3	dsi2	dsi1
This place reflects myself (csi1)	,000			
This place makes me feel like I want to feel (dsi3)	,356	,000		
This place makes me look like I want to look (dsi2)	-,324	,057	,000	
This place present myself to others as the person I want to be (dsi1)	,191	-,195	,060	,000

None of the standardized residuals in the factor exceeded the absolute value of 2,58, which would indicate specification error (Sharma & Sharma, 1996).

#### 5.4.1.2.7.2. LIFE MEANING & INTRINSIC REWARDS

The CFA assessment of the initial theoretical life meaning rewards proposed model with 4 items reveals that the model does not fit the data well, from both descriptive (fit indices) and statistical point of view. Table 80 shows the overall model fit indices:

Table 80: Model Fit/ Goodness of fit measures for the life meaning & intrinsic rewards model (N=923)

CFA MODEL	CMIN	P-value	AGFI	RMSEA	GFI	RMR	NFI	TLI	CFI	AIC	BIC
Life meaning & intrinsic rewards	98,106	0,000	0,735	0,228	0,947	0,093	0,952	0,858	0,953	114,106	152,727

GFI, goodness-of-fit index; RMSEA, root-mean-square error of approximation; RMR, standardized root mean square residual; AGFI, adjusted goodness-of-fit; NFI, Normed fit index; TLI, Tucker-Lewis index; CFI, comparative fit index; AIC, Akaike Information Criterion; BIC, Bayesian Information Criterion



The theoretical life meaning & intrinsic rewards model is rejected both statistically and descriptively. More specifically, probability level equals zero, and thus from a statistical point of view, the model is rejected at both 5% and 1% levels. From a descriptive point of view, the life meaning & intrinsic rewards model (one factor) with 4 items does not fit the data well and it could be modified and improved. The modification procedure was analogous to that of self-love, nostalgia, long term relationship, intuitive fit, emotional attachment, self-identity, positive psychological states, interpersonal love and passionate/romantic driven behavior procedure (based on both theory and statistics). An optimal solution was emerged with one factor comprising of 4 items (combined with a familiarity item, which based on theory belongs to self-destination integration as well) was added to the factor. The revised factor of life meaning & intrinsic rewards is acceptable at both 5% and 1% probability level and fits the data almost perfectly. Table 81 depicts the models fit indices of life meaning & intrinsic rewards factor:

Table 81: Model Fit/ Goodness of fit measures for the life meaning & intrinsic rewards revised model (N=923)

CFA MODEL	CMIN	P-value	AGFI	RMSEA	GFI	RMR	NFI	TLI	CFI	AIC	BIC
Life meaning & intrinsic rewards	0,660	0,719	0,998	0,001	1	0,010	1	1,003	1	16,660	55,281

GFI, goodness-of-fit index; RMSEA, root-mean-square error of approximation; RMR, standardized root mean square residual; AGFI, adjusted goodness-of-fit; NFI, Normed fit index; TLI, Tucker-Lewis index; CFI, comparative fit index; AIC, Akaike Information Criterion; BIC, Bayesian Information Criterion

The revised life meaning & intrinsic rewards factor is acceptable from a statistical point of view at both 5% and 1% probability level. From a descriptive point of view, the goodness of fit indices as well as the AGFI and the TLI indices are acceptable, and also the Root Mean Square Error Approximation is acceptable and supports the admissible solution of revised model (Kelloway, 1998; Diamantopoulos & Sigauw, 2000; Kline, 2005; Tsoukatos & Rand, 2006; Reisinger & Mavondo, 2006). The AIC (Akaike Information Criterion) values are much smaller in the revised model than in



the theoretical proposed life meaning rewards model. Hence, according to fit indices, the revised model is way much better than the theoretical one and fits the data well. Apart from the fit indices assessment, a post hoc test was also conducted (sequential chi-square difference test (SCDT)) (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988) in order to investigate whether the revised model is indeed better compared to the theoretical one. The analysis indicated that there is a statistically significant difference in chi-square value between the theoretical and the revised factor model at both probability levels 1% and 5%. This means that the revised model (4 items) fits the data much better than the theoretical proposed one. In addition, none of the standardized residuals in the model exceeded the absolute value of 2,58, which would indicate specification error (Sharma & Sharma, 1996).

### Maximum Likelihood Estimates

Table 82 depicts the Regression Weights of the items in the life meaning/intrinsic rewards factor, as well as the standard errors, the critical ratio values and the p-values.

Table 82: Regression Weights

		Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
This place makes my life meaningful	<--- Life meaning/intrinsic rewards	1,139	,043	26,686	***
This place is inherently important for me	<--- Life meaning/intrinsic rewards	1,361	,044	30,663	***
In this place, I feel like I am home	<--- Life meaning/intrinsic rewards	1,041	,050	20,786	***
This place has given new perspectives in my life	<--- Life meaning/intrinsic rewards	1,280	,051	25,352	***

\*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

Critical ratio values (which are exactly the same with the z-values), exceed the critical value of 2 -for 5% level- and 2,3 -for 1% level-, and p-values < 0.001. Thus, all items load statistically significantly on the life meaning/ intrinsic rewards factor.



Table 83: Standardized Regression Weights

		Estimate
This place makes my life meaningful	<--- Life meaning/intrinsic rewards	,784
This place is inherently important for me	<--- Life meaning/intrinsic rewards	,867
In this place, I feel like I am home	<--- Life meaning/intrinsic rewards	,649
This place has given new perspectives in my life	<--- Life meaning/intrinsic rewards	,755

Table 83 depicts the factor loadings that represent the strength of the linear relation between each factor and its associated items (Bollen, 1989; Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1999).

Table 84: Standardized Residual Covariances

	sexp4	fam1	life3	life1
This place has given new perspectives in my life (sexp4)	,000			
In this place, I feel like I am home (fam1)	-,204	,000		
This place is inherently important for me (life3)	,081	-,033	,000	
This place makes my life meaningful (life1)	-,036	,233	-,052	,000

None of the standardized residuals in the factor exceeded the absolute value of 2,58, which would indicate specification error (Sharma & Sharma, 1996).



Overall, table 85 summarizes the results of CFA for each destination love construct.

Table 85: Model fit statistics of the destination love constructs (N=923)

Measure	CMIN	P-value	AGFI	RMSEA	GFI	RMR	NFI	TLI	CFI	AIC
Self-confirmation	8.244	0.143	0.989	0.027	0.996	0.023	0.996	0.997	0.998	28.244
Well-being	14.091	0.015	0.982	0.044	0.994	0.033	0.092	0.989	0.994	34.091
Self-transformation	5.439	0.066	0.985	0.043	0.997	0.030	0.995	0.991	0.997	21.439
Anthropomorphism	1.266	0.531	0.997	0.000	0.999	0.005	0.999	1.001	1	17.266
Emotional solidarity	0.261	0.878	0.999	0.000	1	0.003	1	1.002	1	16.261
Passionate/romantic driven behavior	7.272	0.026	0.981	0.053	0.996	0.025	0.996	0.990	0.997	23.272
Positive psychological states	1.905	0.386	0.995	0.000	0.999	0.007	0.999	1	1	17.905
Emotional attachment	4.905	0.086	0.987	0.040	0.997	0.020	0.997	0.995	0.998	20.905
Natural/intuitive fit	0.239	0.887	0.999	0.000	1	0.003	1	1.003	1	16.239
Long-term relationship/loyalty	6.087	0.048	0.983	0.047	0.998	0.021	0.997	0.995	0.998	22.087
Self-identity	3.018	0.221	0.992	0.024	0.998	0.014	0.998	0.998	0.999	19.018
Life meaning/intrinsic rewards	0.660	0.719	0.998	0.001	1	0.010	1	1.003	1	16.660
Nostalgia & frequent thoughts	2.008	0.366	0.995	0.002	0.999	0.019	0.999	1	1	18.008

GFI, goodness-of-fit index; RMSEA, root-mean-square error of approximation; RMR, standardized root mean square residual; AGFI, adjusted goodness-of-fit; NFI, Normed fit index; TLI, Tucker-Lewis index; CFI, comparative fit index; AIC, Akaike Information Criterion



#### 5.4.2. SEM-PLS

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The type of destination love model is a multidimensional, reflective-formative third order model. As mentioned in the previous section (5.4), each first order construct represents a specific '*phenomenon*' (e.g., Bagozzi, 2011) or '*feeling*' felt with or experienced at a destination. As such, its presence is reflected upon the sample of items used to measure it. The formative reasoning relies on this study's findings that while the dimensions that form destination love are felt across diverse destinations, these dimensions are nuanced, expressed and manifested quite distinctly for each destination (in line with Swanson, 2017). Each destination elicits a unique mixture of love manifestations to each individual. In addition, each person is a unique entity and displays a unique amalgam of love manifestations towards a destination or destinations. Each individual feels and displays a distinct mixture of love manifestations towards a destination, since she/he gets different experiences and emotional benefits out of relationships with different destinations. In line with the branding context (Sarkar, 2014), tourists' love feeling towards a destination is not exclusive or exclusionary (Swanson, 2017), since people can love more than one destination, for different reasons (Swanson, 2017).

In partial least squares structural path modelling (PLS-PM), higher order models have become a common choice for academics across various disciplines, including marketing (e.g., Henseler, Ringle & Sinkovics, 2009; Hair, Sarstedt, Ringle & Mena, 2012; Sinkovics, Richter, Ringle, & Schlägel, 2016) and tourism (e.g., Ali, Rasoolimanesh, Sarstedt, Ringle & Ryu, 2018), since researchers can efficiently evaluate and substantiate complex theoretical models by using PLS (Cheah, Ting, Ramayah, Memon, Cham & Ciavolino, 2019). Hierarchical component models, such as destination love model, usually consist of a range of multidimensional reflective measurements shown as lower order constructs, to form the higher order construct (Jarvis, MacKenzie, & Podsakoff, 2003). Subsequently, the type of measurement models used for first order constructs (e.g., self-transformation, long-term relationship, intuitive fit), second order constructs (e.g., self-love, self-destination integration, positive emotional connection) and third order construct (destination love) were determined separately (Hair et al., 2018) and supported by the theory (Nitti & Ciavolino, 2014; Ciavolino, Salvatore, Mossi & Lagetto, 2018).





In this study, the repeated indicators approach (Wold, 1982; Lohmöller, 1989; Nitti & Ciavolino, 2014) was used in order to estimate the higher order model of destination love. More specifically, the manifest indicators of the lower order constructs (e.g., self-confirmation, positive psychological states) were reused for the Higher Order Constructs (second and third level). For example, self-love construct consists of three lower order constructs (self-transformation, self-confirmation, self well being) with four or five manifest items each, so all these measurement items of the three lower order constructs were reused as items/ indicators for the second-order construct (self-love). The same holds for the third order construct (destination love). All the measurement items of its lower order constructs were reused as its formative items.

### RESULTS OF PLS-SEM ANALYSIS

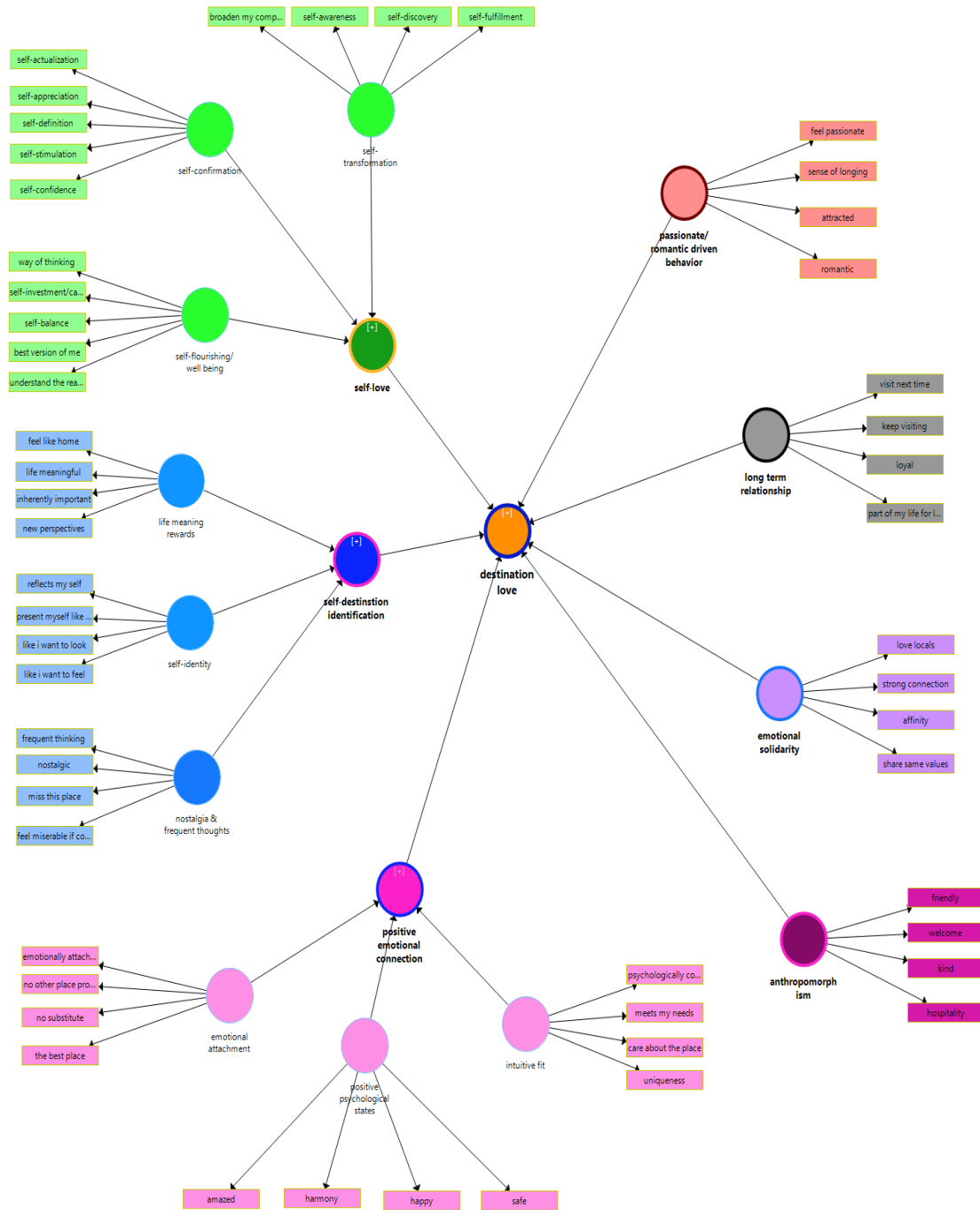
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The SmartPLS 3.2.7 statistical software was used to perform the statistical analysis of destination love model. The results of PLS-SEM were assessed following a systematic process: firstly, the measurement destination love model was assessed, followed by the destination love structural model (Hair et al., 2017). Initially, anthropomorphisation and emotional solidarity were perceived to form a second order factor (love stemming from locals). However, the path from anthropomorphism to love stemming from locals was insignificant ( $p > 0.05$ ). Thus, it was decided anthropomorphism and emotional solidarity to constitute two distinct dimensions in destination love model. Moreover, even though nostalgia & frequent thoughts was a statistical significant first order dimension of destination love, based on Batra et al. (2012) reasoning that frequent thoughts is part of self-brand integration, and that self-brand integration is about *“a brand’s ability to express the consumers’ actual and desired identities, its ability to connect to life’s deeper meanings and provide intrinsic rewards, and frequent thoughts about it”* (Batra et al., 2012: 31), as well as the findings of Volkov, Johnson Morgan & Summers, (2008) which support that a key social/psychological mechanism such as nostalgia is a determinant of consumers’ identification with a brand and thus can develop high levels of consumer-brand identification, it was moved under the self-destination integration dimension and indeed the model became more parsimonious. Tourists frequently think of the destination or are nostalgic towards the destination in order to preserve their connectedness with it. It is actually the tourists’ memories that make them integrate with destination and be a part of it.



Based on the pls algorithm and bootstrap results, the most parsimonious model of destination love is depicted as following:

Figure 8: Destination love figure





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#### 5.4.2.1. EVALUATION OF THE MEASUREMENT MODEL

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The destination love model is consisted of both reflectively and formatively measured constructs. To evaluate the formative and reflective measures of destination love model, different metrics are used (Hair et al., 2017). The reflective measurement model is evaluated based on its internal consistency, reliability and validity. Validation is crucial for the measurement scale development (Schmitt & Klimoski, 1991). Moreover, Cronbach and Meehl (1955) stress the challenge of establishing construct validity for a new scale as well as its complexities. This dissertation follows well-established guidelines in social and behavioral literatures and offers a systematic methodological process in order to validate the destination love measures. This process contributes to the quest for valid and reliable scales in the field of tourism (e.g., Hosany et al., 2015). The rigorous validation steps of the destination love scale could “*offer researchers a valuable process for future extension and replication studies*” (e.g., Hosany et al., 2015: 22).

Campbell and Fiske (1959) suggest two aspects to evaluate the construct validity

- a. **Convergent validity:** it shows the degree of confidence we have that a construct is well measured by its items.
- b. **Discriminant validity:** it shows the degree to which measures of different constructs are unrelated.

To evaluate the measurement model, the internal consistency reliability (Cronbach’s alpha and composite reliability), indicator reliability (indicator loadings), convergent validity (average variance extracted) and discriminant validity are examined (Hair et al., 2017). Concerning the evaluation of the formative measurement model, it follows different guidelines such as multicollinearity testing, the explained variance R<sup>2</sup>, as well as indicator weights.



#### 5.4.2.1.1. CONSTRUCT RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

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According to Fornell-Larcker (1981) criterion (which is commonly used to evaluate the degree of shared variance between the latent variables of the model), the convergent validity of the measurement model can be assessed by the Composite Reliability (CR) and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE). AVE measures the level of variance captured by a construct versus the level due to measurement error. AVE values above 0.7 are considered very good, whereas, the level of 0.5 is the cut off point and thus acceptable. Cronbach's alpha is a measure of internal consistency reliability that yields lower values than the composite reliability (CR) and it assumes the same thresholds with CR (Sarstedt, Ringle & Hair, 2017). Hence, Composite Reliability can be considered as a less biased estimate of reliability than Cronbach's Alpha. The cut off point of CR is 0.7 and thus values above 0.7 are acceptable (e.g., Batra et al., 2012; Hair et al., 2013; Alarcón, Sánchez & De Olavide, 2015; Hair et al. 2017). However, in exploratory research CR values between 0.6 and 0.7 can be also considered acceptable (Hair et al. 2017). On the other hand, CR values that are higher than 0.95 could be perceived as problematic, since they show that the items are nearly redundant and identical (Sarstedt, Ringle & Hair, 2017). This could be explained by using (almost) identical item questions in a survey instrument or even undesirable participants' response patterns like that of straight lining (Diamantopoulos et al., 2012; Sarstedt, Ringle & Hair, 2017). In general, *"in PLS-SEM Cronbach's alpha is the lower bound, while CR is the upper bound of internal consistency reliability when estimating reflective measurement models with PLS-SEM"* (Sarstedt, Ringle & Hair, 2017:16). Therefore both measures should be taken into account by researchers when assessing internal consistency reliability (Sarstedt, Ringle & Hair, 2017). Alternatively, researchers could also take into account the reliability coefficient of rho\_A (Dijkstra & Henseler, 2015b), *"which usually returns a value between Cronbach's alpha and the composite reliability"* (Sarstedt, Ringle & Hair, 2017:16). More specifically, the assessment of the destination love constructs show that all standards of convergent validity were met, factor loadings were more than 0.60 and all measurement items of each construct in the model are statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ,  $t\text{-values} > 1.96$ ). Composite reliability as well as Cronbach's alpha were greater than 0.70, while Average Variance Extracted (AVE) of all constructs



exceeded the critical value of 0.50 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Chin, 2010; Batra et al., 2012; Hair et al., 2013; Cheah et al., 2019) .

Table 86: Construct Reliability and Validity

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
anthropomorphism	0,889	0,890	0,923	0,751
destination love		1,000		
emotional attachment	0,869	0,871	0,911	0,719
emotional solidarity	0,903	0,906	0,933	0,776
intuitive fit	0,868	0,868	0,910	0,716
life meaning rewards	0,847	0,850	0,898	0,687
long term relationship_	0,900	0,903	0,930	0,770
nostalgia & frequent thoughts	0,838	0,847	0,892	0,675
passionate/romantic driven behavior	0,831	0,856	0,890	0,671
positive psychological states	0,850	0,860	0,900	0,692
positive emotional connection		1,000		
self-confirmation	0,869	0,873	0,905	0,656
self-destinstion identification		1,000		
self-flourishing/well being	0,837	0,842	0,885	0,606
self-identity	0,873	0,876	0,913	0,725
self-love		1,000		
self-transformation	0,805	0,809	0,873	0,633



Table 87: Reliability and validity of Destination love scales (dimensions, sub-dimensions & items)

**Emotional solidarity**

(Cronbach's alpha= .903; Rho\_A= .906; composite reliability = .933; AVE = .776)

I feel strong connection with the locals  
I feel strong affinity towards the locals  
I share the same values with the locals  
I love the people/locals of this place

**Anthropomorphism**

(Cronbach's alpha= .889; Rho\_A= .890; composite reliability = .923; AVE = .751)

I feel welcomed by the locals  
Locals are very kind towards me  
The hospitality in this place is great  
Locals are friendly towards me

**Self-love**

**Self-confirmation** (Cronbach's alpha= .869; Rho\_A= .873; composite reliability = .905; AVE = .656)

This place makes me appreciate myself more  
When I am in this place, I feel the real me  
This place stimulates all my senses  
This place contributes to my self-confidence  
This place contributes to my self-actualization

**Well-being** (Cronbach's alpha= .837; Rho\_A= .842; composite reliability = .885; AVE = .606)

This place makes me understand the real values in life  
This place contributes to my self-balance  
Visiting this place is a personal investment for me  
This place brings out the best version of me  
This place has influenced (positively) my way of thinking

**Self-transformation** (Cronbach's alpha= .805; Rho\_A= .809; composite reliability = .873; AVE= .633)

This place has broadened my competences (e.g., skills, knowledge)  
This place improves my self-awareness  
This place helps to discover myself  
This place fulfills my mind and soul

**Self-destination integration**

**Self-identity** (Cronbach's alpha= .873; Rho\_A= .876; composite reliability = .913; AVE = .725)

This place reflects myself  
This place helps present myself to others as the person I want to be  
This place makes me look like I want to look  
This place makes me feel like I want to feel

**Life meaning & intrinsic rewards** (Cronbach's alpha= .847; Rho\_A= .850; composite reliability = .898; AVE = .687)

This place makes my life meaningful  
This place is inherently important for me



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This place has given new perspectives in my life  
When I am in this place, I feel like I am home

**Nostalgia& Frequent thoughts** (Cronbach's alpha= .838; Rho\_A= .847; composite reliability = .892; AVE = .675)

I feel nostalgic about this place  
I miss this place often  
If I could never visit this place again, I would feel miserable  
I frequently find myself thinking about visiting this place

**Passionate/romantic driven behavior**

(Cronbach's alpha= .831; Rho\_A= .856; composite reliability = .890; AVE = .671)

I feel passionate about this place  
I feel a sense of longing to visit this place  
This place triggers my romantic feelings  
I feel attracted by this place

**Positive emotional connection**

**Positive psychological states** (Cronbach's alpha= .850; Rho\_A= .860; composite reliability = .900; AVE = .692)

I feel happy when I am in this place  
I feel harmony when I am in this place  
I feel safe in this place  
I feel amazed by this place

**Emotional attachment** (Cronbach's alpha= .869; Rho\_A= .871; composite reliability = .911; AVE= .719)

I feel emotionally attached with this place  
No other place can provide the same holiday experience as this destination  
This destination is the best place for what I like to do during my holidays  
I would not substitute this place for any other place

**Natural/Intuitive fit** (Cronbach's alpha= .868; Rho\_A= .868; composite reliability = .910; AVE = .716)

I love the uniqueness of the place  
I feel psychologically comfortable when being in this place  
I do care about the place  
This place meets my needs perfectly

**Long-term relationship**

(Cronbach's alpha= .900; Rho\_A= .903; composite reliability = .930; AVE = .770)

I will visit this place the next time I go on vacations  
I intend to keep visiting this place  
I am a loyal visitor of this place  
I expect that this place will be part of my life for a long time



#### 5.4.2.1.2. DISCRIMINANT VALIDITY

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*“Discriminant validity is the extent to which the items representing a latent variable discriminate that construct from items representing other theoretical variables”* (Fornell & Larcker, 1981, as cited in Hosany et al., 2015: 17). Discriminant validity assessment of the destination love model draws from Henseler, Ringle and Sarstedt (2015) heterotrait-monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT) measure. The HTMT criterion is defined as *“the mean value of the indicator correlations across constructs (i.e., the heterotrait-heteromethod correlations) relative to the (geometric) mean of the average correlations of indicators measuring the same construct”* (Sarstedt, Ringle & Hair, 2017: 17). High HTMT values denote discriminant validity problems. Henseler et al. (2015) suggest *“a threshold value of 0.90 if the path model includes constructs that are conceptually very similar”* (Sarstedt, Ringle & Hair, 2017: 17), meaning that an HTMT value above 0.90 indicates a lack of discriminant validity. However, when the constructs in the model *“are conceptually more distinct, researchers should consider 0.85 as threshold for HTMT”* (Henseler et al. 2015, as cited in Sarstedt, Ringle & Hair, 2017: 17).

The results in Table 88 show that the HTMT values for the striking majority of the constructs in the destination love model are below or very close to the conservative threshold of 0.85 (Kline, 2016; Voorhees, Brady, Calantone, & Ramirez, 2016; Franke & Sarstedt, 2018) or that of 0.90 (Sarstedt, Ringle & Hair, 2017). However, there are some discriminant validity issues among self-transformation, self-confirmation and well being constructs, between life meaning rewards and self-transformation as well as life meaning rewards and nostalgia constructs.





Table 88: Discriminant Validity (Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio-HTMT)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1. anthropomorphism													
2. emotional attachment	0,447												
3. emotional solidarity	0,731	0,686											
4. intuitive fit	0,551	0,833	0,712										
5. life meaning rewards	0,505	0,816	0,784	0,797									
6. long term relationship	0,453	0,768	0,683	0,741	0,725								
7. nostalgia/frequent thoughts	0,525	0,817	0,773	0,790	0,902	0,800							
8. passionate/romantic behavior	0,436	0,701	0,697	0,721	0,740	0,698	0,851						
9. positive psychological state	0,594	0,713	0,640	0,860	0,657	0,662	0,681	0,635					
10. self-confirmation	0,420	0,673	0,680	0,687	0,801	0,659	0,799	0,778	0,611				
11. well being	0,476	0,720	0,706	0,728	0,889	0,664	0,841	0,781	0,610	0,987			
12. self-identity	0,565	0,660	0,657	0,659	0,847	0,601	0,745	0,526	0,611	0,662	0,691		
13. self-transformation	0,476	0,756	0,767	0,775	0,939	0,706	0,883	0,836	0,638	1,026	1,059	0,724	

In order to further evaluate the discriminant validity issue, the VIF values of all these constructs were calculated and assessed. All the inner and outer VIF values of the model do not suggest severe multicollinearity. A large value of VIF is used as an indicator of a severe multicollinearity. A VIF value exceeding 10 suggests severe multicollinearity (e.g., Mason et al., 1989; Chatterjee & Price, 1990; Hair et al., 1995; Kutner et al., 2005; Freund et al., 2006; O'Brien, 2007; Alin, 2010), although some academics suggest a more conservative threshold that of 5 (VIF should not exceed 5).



An additional analysis of VIF assessment was implemented in SPSS 21. The results are the following:

**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model	Collinearity Statistics	
	Tolerance	VIF
WELL-BEING	,219	4,560
SELF-CONFIRMATION	,261	3,837
NOSTALGIA	,357	2,800
LIFE MEANING REWARDS	,324	3,085

a. Dependent Variable: SELF-TRANSFORMATION

Concerning the self-transformation construct, no multicollinearity issues with well being, self-confirmation, nostalgia and lifemeaning rewards were found since  $VIF < 10$ .

**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model	Collinearity Statistics	
	Tolerance	VIF
SELF-CONFIRMATION	,249	4,014
NOSTALGIA	,355	2,815
LIFE MEANING REWARDS	,313	3,197
SELF-TRANSFORMATION	,191	5,234

a. Dependent Variable: WELL-BEING

As it concerns well-being, again no multicollinearity issues were detected, since  $VIF < 5$  or 10 (only self-transformation is slightly above 5 but still it is below 10, therefore no severe multicollinearity problem is detected).



**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model	Collinearity Statistics	
	Tolerance	VIF
NOSTALGIA	,357	2,801
LIFE MEANING REWARDS	,304	3,287
SELF-TRANSFORMATION	,201	4,984
WELL-BEING	,220	4,543

a. Dependent Variable: SELF-CONFIRMATION

The same holds for self-confirmation and its multicollinearity with the other constructs. No multicollinearity issues are detected (VIF < 10).

**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model	Collinearity Statistics	
	Tolerance	VIF
LIFE MEANING REWARDS	,375	2,665
SELF-TRANSFORMATION	,165	6,057
WELL-BEING	,188	5,306
SELF-CONFIRMATION	,214	4,665

a. Dependent Variable: NOSTALGIA

As it concerns nostalgia, its multicollinearity with self-transformation and well-being is slightly higher than 5, however still VIF < 10, so no severe multicollinearity problem exists.

**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model	Collinearity Statistics	
	Tolerance	VIF
SELF-TRANSFORMATION	,175	5,719
WELL-BEING	,194	5,164
SELF-CONFIRMATION	,213	4,691
NOSTALGIA	,438	2,284

a. Dependent Variable: LIFE MEANING REWARDS



The same holds for life meaning rewards. Its multicollinearity with self-transformation and well-being is slightly higher than 5, although still  $VIF < 10$ , thus no severe multicollinearity problem exists.

Even though, there were very few isolated cases of VIFs marginally exceeding the conservative threshold of 5, in no cases did the VIFs for any of these specific constructs come anywhere close to the high threshold value of 10. Thus, it can be concluded that discriminant validity holds for all constructs in the destination love model.

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#### 5.4.2.2. EVALUATION OF THE STRUCTURAL MODEL

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The next step, after having evaluated the measurement model, where the reliability and validity of the constructs were confirmed, the evaluation of the structural model is implemented. In PLS-SEM, the assessment of the structural model is mainly based on the predictive capabilities of the model, the explained variance  $R^2$  and the significance of the path coefficients (Hair et al., 2017). Initially, the structural model was checked for potential multicollinearity issues (Hair et al., 2017). All VIF values were below 5 or 10, so no severe multicollinearity issues were detected for the model. Moreover, all structural relationships of the model are statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ,  $t$ -values  $> 1.96$ ). In figure 9, all  $t$ -values are shown for each relationship (structural and measurement). As it concerns the variances of the destination love constructs, 99.3% of the variance of self-love is explained by its three sub-constructs, namely, self-confirmation, self-transformation and well-being. Furthermore, 99.8% of self-destination integration variance is explained by its three sub-constructs, namely life meaning & intrinsic rewards, nostalgia and self-identity. 99.5% of positive emotional connection variance is explained by its three sub-constructs, namely positive psychological states, emotional attachment and intuitive fit. Finally, 98.5% of destination love variance is explained by self-love, self-destination integration, positive emotional connection, anthropomorphism, emotional solidarity, long-term relationship with destination and passion/romantic driven behavior towards the destination.

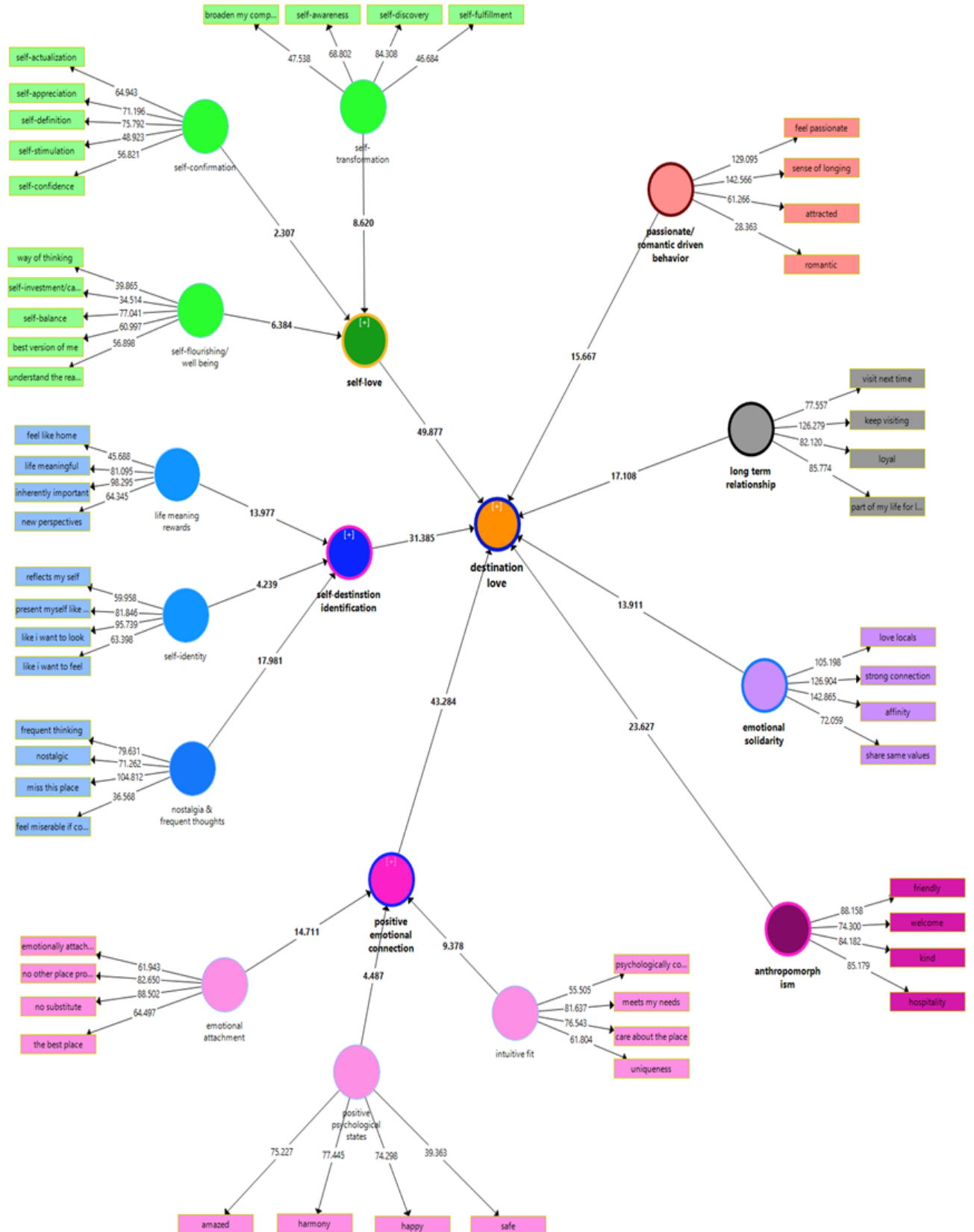
Table 89: T-values & P-values of the destination love model

	<b>T-values</b>	<b>P-values</b>
<b>anthropomorphism → destination love</b>	23,627	<b>0,000</b>
<b>emotional attachment → positive emotional connection</b>	14,711	<b>0,000</b>
<b>emotional solidarity → destination love</b>	13,911	<b>0,000</b>
<b>intuitive fit → positive emotional connection</b>	9,378	<b>0,000</b>
<b>life meaning rewards → self-destination identification</b>	13,977	<b>0,000</b>
<b>long term relationship → destination love</b>	17,108	<b>0,000</b>
<b>nostalgia &amp; frequent thoughts → self-destination identification</b>	17,981	<b>0,000</b>
<b>passionate/romantic driven behavior → destination love</b>	15,667	<b>0,000</b>
<b>Positive psychological state → positive emotional connection</b>	4,487	<b>0,000</b>
<b>positive emotional connection → destination love</b>	43,284	<b>0,000</b>
<b>self-confirmation → self-love</b>	2,307	<b>0,021</b>
<b>self-destination identification → destination love</b>	31,385	<b>0,000</b>
<b>self-flourishing/well being → self-love</b>	6,384	<b>0,000</b>
<b>self-identity → self-destination identification</b>	4,239	<b>0,000</b>
<b>self-love → destination love</b>	49,877	<b>0,000</b>
<b>self-transformation → self-love</b>	8,620	<b>0,000</b>

Figure 9 depicts the measurement as well as the structural relationships of the model as well as their significance (t-values).



Figure 9: T-values in destination love model



Traditionally, in PLS-SEM analysis, the results of the path coefficients and their significance, as well as the R<sup>2</sup> values were enough to yield an evaluation of the structural model, since PLS-SEM did not offer a global goodness-of-fit criterion to assess the overall model fit (Vinzi et al., 2010; Gotz et al., 2010; Henseler et al., 2012; Hair et al., 2012). However, recently, academics have suggested that the overall goodness of fit should be the starting point of model evaluation, and that the main goodness-of-fit criteria of the model to be assessed via PLS-SEM analysis is the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) and the Normed Fit Index (NFI) (Henseler et al., 2016; Hair et al., 2017). Table 90 summarizes the results that show that the destination love model fits the data well (Table 76).

Table 90: Model fit

	Estimated Model	Model Fit
<b>SRMR</b>	0,033	Less than 0,08 (Hu & Bentler, 1998)
<b>d_ULS</b>	0,100	All those measures assessed by NFI value
<b>d_G</b>	0,087	and NFI should be above 0,90 (Lohmöller, 1989)
<b>Chi-Square</b>	412,007	
<b>NFI</b>	0,962	
<b>rms Theta</b>	0,238	Not meaningful for formative models (e.g., Rahahleh et al., 2020)

The Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (here SRMR = 0,033) constitutes a goodness of fit measure for PLS-SEM that can be used to avoid model misspecification and it is lower than 0,08 (e.g., Hu & Bentler, 1998; Hair et al., 2017), which indicates a good model fit. More specifically, SRMR index shows the extent to which the conceptual model is consistent with experimental data. SRMR determines whether the data supports the set of hypotheses (for instance influence of latent variables on each other) or not (e.g., Noubar & RoshanZadeh, 2017).

Moreover, the Normed Fit Index (NFI = 0,962) is higher than 0,90 (e.g., Bentler & Bonett, 1980; Byrne 2013; Hair et al., 2017) and thus it can be concluded that the model fit is good.



However, rms Theta (0,238) is higher than the conservative threshold value of 0,12 (Henseler et al., 2014; Hair et al., 2017), but still acceptable for some other academics (e.g., Sri, Siti & Andriani, 2017). At this point, it should be also stressed that as it concerns rms Theta, it is solely useful for the evaluation of reflective models since residuals of the external model is not significant for the combined measurement model and thus for formative measurement models rms Theta is not meaningful (Lohmöller, 1989; Noubar & RoshanZadeh, 2017; Rahahleh, Al-Nsour, Moflih, Alabaddi, Al-nassar & Al-Nsour, 2020). So, for this study's model rms theta is not meaningful. After all, all reflective models of this destination love model were assessed for their model fit with an AMOS 21 procedure (described in the section of CFA analysis) and showed a very good statistical and descriptive fit (Covariance-based analyses, such as that on AMOS, give way more accurate evaluations for model fit than PLS). After all, researchers should be cautious when using and interpreting model fit indexes in PLS-SEM, since too little is known about these measures' behavior across a range of data and model constellations, so more research is needed (Hair et al., 2017). Moreover, it is still an open question whether fit measures as described above add any value to PLS-SEM analyses in general (Hair et al., 2017). PLS-SEM focuses on prediction rather than on explanatory modeling and therefore requires a different type of validation (Hair et al., 2017). More precisely, validation of PLS-SEM results is concerned with generalization, which is the ability to predict sample data, or, preferably, out-of-sample data (Hair et al., 2017). In this PLS context, fit, as put into effect by SRMR, RMStheta, etc offers little value (Hair et al., 2017). In fact, their use can even be harmful as researchers may be tempted to sacrifice predictive power to achieve better "fit" (Hair et al., 2017). Therefore, Hair et al. (2017) advise against the routine use of such statistics in the context of PLS-SEM.





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### 5.4.2.3. NOMOLOGICAL VALIDITY

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Additional paths, that of satisfaction and WOM, were added to the model in order to assess the relationship among the concepts and nomological validity. The measurement items of satisfaction were based on Buhalis 6A's (2000) as well as on the work of Neal and Gursoy (2008). WOM items were taken from Carroll & Ahuvia (2006). Evidence of nomological validity is provided by a construct's possession of distinct antecedents and consequences, investigating theoretical relationships between different constructs derived from the literature (Iacobucci, Ostrom & Grayson, 1995). In assessing the nomological validity of the destination love scale, in a multivariate sense, this study relies on Partial Least Squares modeling and investigates satisfaction as an antecedent and Word of Mouth as a consequence of love, which were identified from the literature. In order to establish the significance of the parameter estimates, the t-values were computed using 500 bootstrap samples. The results show that satisfaction influences significantly destination love ( $p < 0,05$ ;  $t\text{-value} = 39,896$ ) and destination love influences statistically significantly WOM ( $p < 0,05$ ;  $t\text{-value} = 31,334$ ). The results of the structural model indicate an acceptable explanatory power as well ( $R^2$  values-coefficient of determination). In particular, 47% of the destination love variance is explained by satisfaction and 38% of WOM variance is explained by destination love. Moreover, all standards of convergent and construct validity and reliability for satisfaction and WOM constructs were met.

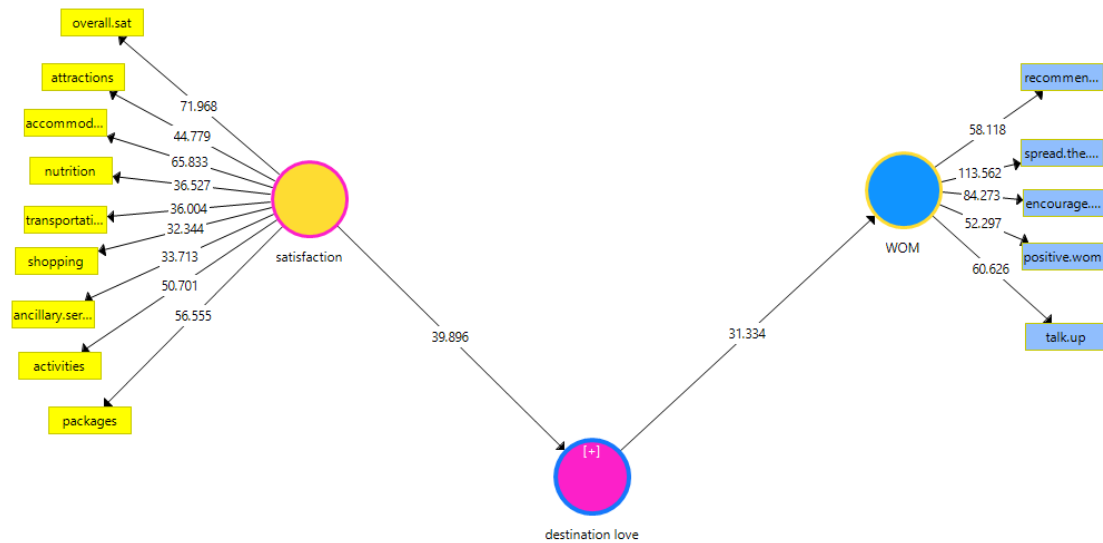


Table 91: Measure, reliability and validity of the variables in the nomological validity test

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Rho_A	Composite Reliability	AVE
<b>WOM</b>	.902	.902	.928	.720
I have recommended this place to other people				
I try to spend the good-word about this place				
I have encouraged other people to visit this place				
I give this place tons of positive word of mouth advertising				
I 'talk up' this place to my friends				
<b>Satisfaction</b>	.907	.915	.923	.574
Overall satisfaction from attractions/sites				
Overall satisfaction from accommodation				
Overall satisfaction from nutrition				
Overall satisfaction from transportation facilities				
Overall satisfaction from shopping				
Overall satisfaction from ancillary services				
Overall satisfaction from activities that are offered				
Overall satisfaction from available packages/offers				
Overall satisfaction from the place				

All the measurement items of satisfaction and WOM load significantly on them ( $p < 0.05$  and  $t\text{-values} > 1.96$ ). The figure below shows the  $t$ -values of the model relationships. The relationships of satisfaction- destination love and destination love- WOM are significant at 5% level ( $p < 0,05$  and  $t\text{-values} > 1,96$ ).

Figure 10: T-values of the model satisfaction-Destination Love-Word Of Mouth



The findings are supported by the literature about love and its relationship with satisfaction as well as WOM, suggesting that high levels of satisfaction are associated with high levels of destination love and high levels of destination love are associated with high levels of positive WOM (e.g., Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006; Batra et al., 2012; Unal & Aydin, 2013; Fetscherin, 2014; Leventhal, Wallace, Buil & de Chernatony, 2014; Kudeshia et al., 2016; Karjaluoto et al., 2016).

Finally, the following table (Table 92) sums up the demographic characteristics of the participants across the three studies of this dissertation.



Table 92 : Demographics of the participants across all studies

		Study 1 (N=75)	Study 2 (N=334)	Study 3 (N=923)
<b>NATIONALITY</b>	Greek	-	10.2%	2.6%
	German	5.3%	9.9%	10.4%
	British	6.7%	10.5%	12.1%
	French	6.7%	10.8%	10.7%
	Italian	9.3%	7.5%	11.4%
	Spanish	5.3%	3.9%	7.5%
	USA	14.7%	20.1%	14.3%
	Australian	5.3%	5.7%	5.5%
	Dutch	5.3%	3.9%	5.2%
	Portuguese	4%	0.6%	0.4%
	Irish	2.7%	0.6%	2.3%
	Chinese	2.7%	1.8%	0.3%
	Argentinian	2.7%	0.3%	1.3%
	Brazilian	2.7%	0.6%	0.4%
	Colombian	2.7%	0.6%	0.4%
	Belgish	2.7%	0.6%	1.4%
	Slovakian	2.7%	-	0.5%
	Canadian	-	2.1%	2.2%
	Austrian	-	2.1%	2.5%
	Norwegian	-	0.3%	0.9%
Swedish	-	0.6%	1%	
Finnish	-	0.9%	0.3%	
Other		18.5%	6.4%	6.4%
<b>GENDER</b>	Male	49.3%	47.6%	49.2%
	Female	50.7%	52.4%	50.8%
<b>MONTHLY INCOME (euros)</b>	<1000	7.7%	15.5%	15.4%
	1000-1999	23.1%	18.3%	24.2%
	2000-2999	-	18%	17.8%
	3000-5000	46.2%	25.4%	24.9%
	>5000	23.0%	22.8%	17.8%
<b>EDUCATIONAL LEVEL</b>	Basic/High school graduate	18.9%	9%	23.1%
	Student	10.8%	9.3%	11.5%
	College/university graduate	28.4%	35.9%	34.2%
	Master graduate	28.4%	37.4%	23.6%
	PhD	13.5%	8.4%	7.5%
<b>AGE</b>	15-18	1.3%	0.9%	6.8%
	19-25	14.7%	15.3%	21.5%
	26-35	32.0%	35.4%	19.7%
	36-45	11.9%	23.7%	15.9%
	46-55	20.1%	18.2%	17.1%
	56+	20%	6.5%	19%
<b>MARITAL STATUS</b>	Single	57.3%	53.2%	-
	Married	37.4%	39.1%	-
	Divorced	4.0%	6.8%	-
	Widowed	1.3%	0.9%	-



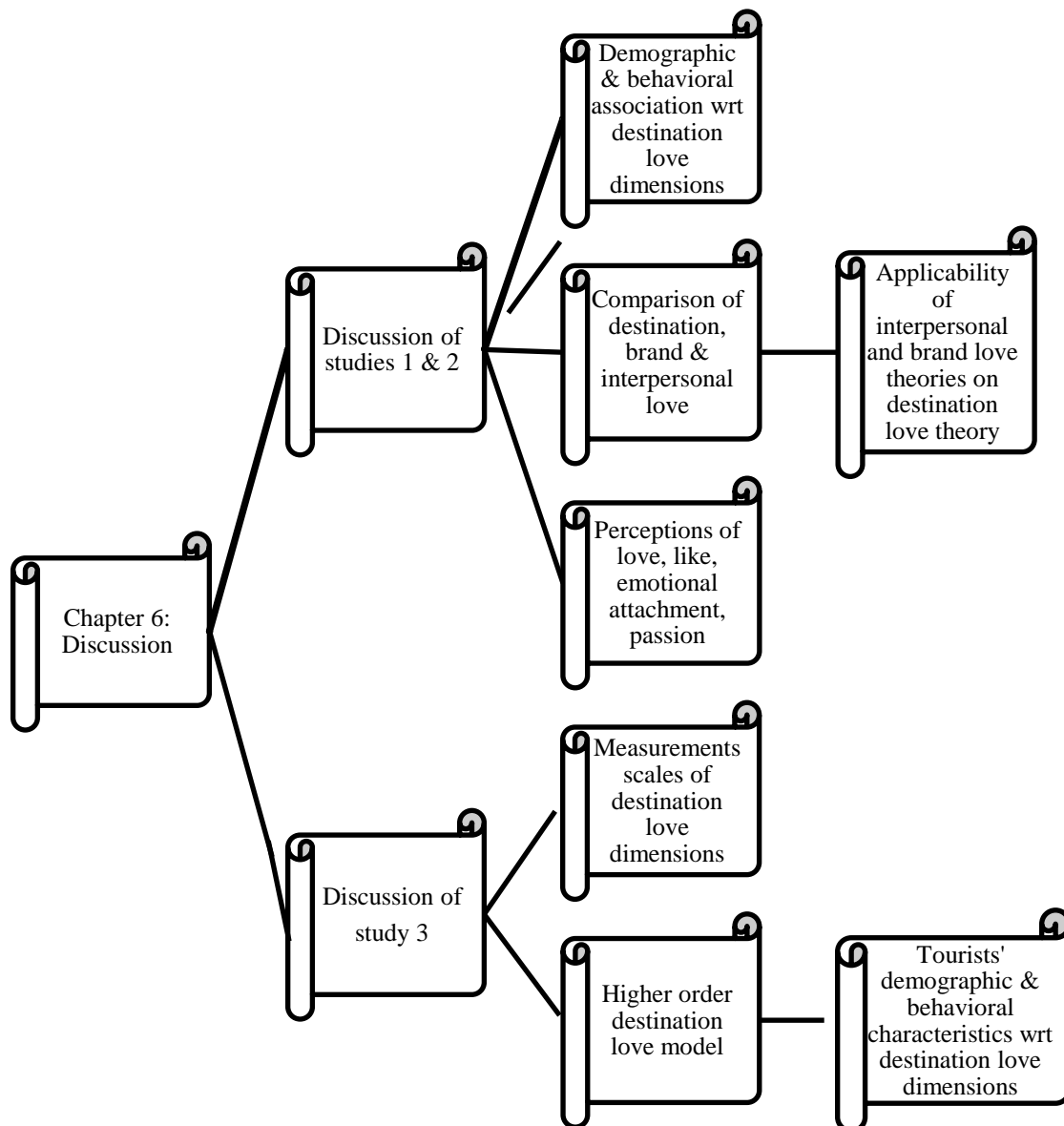
# DISCUSSION

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# CHAPTER SIX: DISCUSSION

## PREVIEW OF CHAPTER SIX





This chapter aims to unroll the main results of all studies (study 1, study 2 and study 3), delve into the meaning, importance and relevance of these results with previous academic studies, and give new insights into love towards tourism destinations. Destination love, like brand love, is comprised of “*a complex constellation of elements, which all of them are potential ways of building it because, as suggested by Rauschnabel and Ahuvia (2014: 376), any research on multidimensional construct is an investigation of its dimensions*” (as cited in Delgado-Ballester, Palazón & Peláez, 2019: 151). Moreover, this chapter sheds light on how each of destination love types vary among different demographic and behavioral characteristics of individuals. More specifically, this chapter describes how individuals ascribe a love meaning to a destination and how these emotional meanings are manifested in their attitudes and behaviors.

## 6.1. DISCUSSION OF STUDY 1 & STUDY 2

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The major objective of both studies was to define and operationalize the notion of destination love. Seven major destination love dimensions emerged. Moreover, an additional goal of the present research was to build on existing cross-cultural love research by exploring potential demographic and behavioral associations with the different types/dimensions of love, in tourism context. A number of interesting findings emerged:

(a) **Nationality:** Firstly, all dimensions of destination love were found to be universal across different cultures, in line with previous research on romantic love (Jankowiak & Fischer, 1992). However, other academics (e.g. Stone, 1988) found differences in how different cultural groups view love (Kim & Hatfield, 2004) and subjective well-being (Diener & Lucas, 2000).

(b) **Gender:** Gender discrepancies were found in the first study as it concerns self-love dimension, and romantic/passion driven behavior, and in the second study concerning romantic/passion driven behavior, self-destination integration and nostalgia. This demonstrates that attitudes and opinions do not cut uniformly across gender demographic characteristics. The results of this investigation show that men and women from different socio-cultural and ethnic settings seem to have different



attitudes and behaviour towards some dimensions of destination love and thus they are not analogous to the findings of Doherty and colleagues (1994) study about love.

(c) **Age:** No major age differences across different destination love types were found. Individuals who are emotionally mature and generally ‘older’ tend to develop destination love towards destinations. These findings support previous research on love, such as Lee’s (1977) explanation of the ‘agapic’ love and Butler and colleagues’ (1995) study on love and wellbeing (Reiss & Havercamp, 2005; Steptoe, et al., 2015) which stress the fact that human growth is associated with adult maturity and that higher motives or emotions are felt or are stronger for older versus younger adults (Lykoudi et al., 2020a).

(d) **Education:** Education appears to be one of the demographic variables to distinguish destination-lovers. Destination lovers comprise mostly the highly educated segments, consistent with other researchers who postulate that a more educated individual would potentially have psychological access to more advanced and more committed relationships (Elder & Rockwell, 1979) in different contexts (eg, Carland et. al., 1995).

(e) **Income:** As expected, the question on the individual monthly level income caused the greatest reticence in the first survey (in- depth interviews). However, more respondents answered the income question in the second study. The majority of self-lovers, self-destination integraters as well as those who articulated destination love as love stemming from locals were of high monthly income. Even though no previous research can be found to correlate love or self-love or self-destination integration development with higher income, it must be noted that income is related with higher educational level and age in tourism (e.g., Björk & Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2016), a result found in the present study.

(f) **Marital Status:** Marital status also appears to be one of the demographic variables to distinguish the self-lovers, those who perceive destination love as positive emotional connection and those who consider destination love as nostalgia. In both studies, these destination love developers were mainly singles, whereas in the rest destination love dimensions, there were marital status discrepancies between the two studies. These findings might show that the emotional type of destination love differs and depends on whether a person is single, married, divorced or widowed. Therefore it may be concluded that human-destination relationships depend or even change over





the course of a person's life and vary in personal significance. To the extent of my knowledge no research has been carried out on love and emotions in relation to marital status in tourism context, and scarce in psychology in general. A study in psychology field (Taormina & Gao, 2013) showed that satisfaction of the self-actualization needs had positive correlations with marital status, a finding that is contradictory to this research.

(g) **Repeat visitation;** Destination lovers were found to be repeat visitors of the loved destination in both studies for all destination love dimensions. This amplifies the importance of first impressions and suggests to the destination managers that priority should be placed on providing emotional experiences in order to attract and satisfy tourists' emotional needs more efficiently.

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### 6.1.1. COMPARISON OF DESTINATION LOVE, BRAND LOVE AND INTERPERSONAL LOVE

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The findings of the second study shed some light on the debate concerning the procedure that consumer research usually explains brand love phenomena using interpersonal love approaches (Batra et al., 2012; Langner et al., 2015) as well as that tourism academics explain destination brand love phenomena using brand love approaches (e.g., Aro et al., 2018), by introducing and examining for the first time those notions in relation to destination love. When it comes to love, a great majority of the participants (75%) claimed that they do love their favorite destination, whereas only 27.9% love a brand. Almost two out of three participants had as a benchmark their interpersonal love feelings when articulating destination love.

First, there is a slight difference between interpersonal love (IL) and destination love (DL) in their emotional nature regarding three love criteria. The majority of respondents (59.5%) perceive DL to be as intense as IL and even slightly more emotional intense, as well as slightly more complex and vaguer than IL. DL is much more objective than IL. An interesting finding is that the majority of the respondents (57.1%) consider IL and DL to be similar. Their similarity could lie on the bi-



directional nature of love. IL is considered bidirectional and DL is partially perceived bi-directional concerning individuals' interaction and relationships with locals.

The vague and complex nature of DL can be considered as a logical outcome, since people are more familiar with the concept of IL, so they seem to articulate easier their love for their beloved ones. Accordingly, it seems easier for respondents to articulate their love towards brands, as brand love (BL) is rational/feature oriented whereas DL is more emotional and experiential oriented. Consequently, DL is characterized by more complex and abstract notions such as self-actualization, self-definition, self-fulfillment and self-expansion, concepts that are by their nature difficult to be articulated. Moreover, DL and BL differ in their emotional nature. It was found that DL encompasses higher emotional intensity, complexity, vagueness but less objectivity than BL. An interesting finding is that only a slight majority believe that BL and DL tend to be similar. The greater objectivity of BL in relation to DL also seems logical as brand love found to be predominately based mainly on rational features (e.g. quality, characteristics of brand), and on clear preference over the other available brands in the market or brand reputation and prestige. In detail, BL can be mainly considered as rational and rather superficial, characterized by brand or product features, as well as social and self-image. On the other hand, DL is more emotional and experiential profound, characterized by higher self needs such as self-actualization, self-expansion and self-fulfillment as well as personal interaction with locals, culture and customs, life meaning rewards, nostalgia and passionate/ romantic behavior . The common characteristics of BL and DL are mainly commitment/loyalty and positive attitudes & emotions, such as excitement, happiness and joy.

Finally, in line with previous studies (e.g., Batra et al., 2012; Langner et al. 2015), it was found that IL and BL constitute different emotions. The emotional nature of IL and of BL is different. IL exceeds BL regarding the intensity, complexity, and vagueness, but not in terms of objectivity, where BL exceeds. A very important finding is that less than 1 out of 3 respondents think that those kinds of love are similar in their emotional nature. Results also showed that rational benefits constitute usually the main trigger of brand relations whereas the nature of IL is often altruistic. That is, the emotional experience of BL differs, in quality and nature, from that of IL. All in all, DL and IL seem to share more similarities than differences, unlike BL and IL.



### 6.1.2.3. THE APPLICABILITY OF INTERPERSONAL LOVE THEORIES AND BRAND LOVE THEORIES TO DESTINATION LOVE THEORY

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The findings revealed that destination and interpersonal love share more similarities than differences, unlike brand love and interpersonal love. Moreover, destination and brand love share marginally more similarities than differences. For many years interpersonal love has been considered as the basis of brand love in terms of the emotional nature. In psychology, interpersonal love is characterized as *“the constellation of behaviors, cognitions and emotions associated with the desire to enter or maintain a close relationship with a specific other person”* (Aron , Aron, Tudor, and Nelson, 1991: 26). On the contrary, recently a rising body of researchers (e.g., Langner, Schmidt, & Fischer, 2015) examined and found that stronger emotions are observed in interpersonal love than in brand love and thus they are perceived as different emotions. Brand love is *“the degree of passionate emotional attachment a satisfied consumer has for a particular trade name”* (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006: 81). Brand love phenomena have been explained by consumer research through interpersonal love theories and measurements. However, consumer-object relations are qualitatively different from interpersonal relations, yet there are sufficient similarities to allow meaningful analogies (Shimp & Madden, 1988). Ahuvia (2005) found that object and interpersonal love have more similarities than differences in consumer contexts. However, recent critiques in the field question this approach (e.g., Batra, et al., 2012). Langner et al. (2015) found that stronger emotions are observed in interpersonal rather than brand love and rational benefits constitute usually the main trigger of consumer-brand relationships whereas the nature of interpersonal love is often altruistic. All studies on love towards destinations are destination-specific (destination brand love) as they are focused on specific destination(s) (e.g., Lee & Hyun, 2016; Swanson, 2017; Aro et al., 2018; Christou, 2018; Andriotis et al., 2020) and are based on already existing love theories and scales from branding or psychology. Specifically, destination brand love is described as *philia*, *storge* and *eros* (Swanson, 2017), *agape* (Christou , 2018), or *passionate love*, *emotional*



*attachment, and self-brand integration* (e.g., Lee & Hyun, 2016; Andriotis et al., 2020), typical interpersonal and/ or brand love notions.

Destination love theory found to share common aspects with that of brand love as well as interpersonal love theories. Not surprisingly, the most widely noted difference in this dissertation findings was that brand love is perceived as a way less emotionally intense relationship than that of interpersonal love. However, the same does not hold for destination love, which is perceived as equally or even slightly more intense than interpersonal love. The majority of the respondents consider interpersonal love and destination love to be similar. Almost two out of three of the participants had as a benchmark their interpersonal love feelings when articulating destination love. Their similarity partially lies on the bi-directional nature of love. Destination love could be perceived as bi-directional concerning tourists' interaction and relationships with locals (emotional solidarity and anthropomorphism), since they return their love through their helpful behaviors towards tourists, which gives an altruistic concern for the beloved one (typical interpersonal love characteristic). Moreover, tourists also claimed that they do care for the loved destination itself (natural/intuitive fit) as a result of appreciation on what they get from this destination (e.g., tranquility, calmness, knowledge, peace of mind, etc), by providing individual work or knowledge voluntarily (e.g., clean the forests/beaches of loved destination, participation on the development of "cultural routes" at loved destination, etc) or even donations in order to enhance or preserve destination's natural and cultural beauty. This has not been found in brand love, since it is considered uni-directional (consumers can love brands but brands can not give love back to consumers) and participants were only concerned with what the brand could do for them and not what they could do for the brand (in line with findings of Batra et al., 2012 about brand love). According to Batra et al. (2012) interpersonal love theories do not provide a suitable brand love theoretical foundation. However, based on Sternberg's (1986, 1997) triangular theory of interpersonal love, passion aspect is included in brand love via the passionate attraction consumers feel for brands (Batra et al., 2012). Passion aspect is also included in destination



love framework, which is “translated” as passionate desire to visit the loved destination and a sense of longing towards destination. It should be stressed that “*passion may play a larger role in short term relationships and may be more dependent on psychophysiological arousal than intimacy and commitment*” (Madey & Rodgers, 2009:82), since it is “*relatively unstable*” and can “*fluctuate unpredictably*” (Sternberg, 1988:49). On the other hand, intimacy component, which refers to feelings, thoughts and actions that are linked to the experience of closeness, warmth, and bondedness in loving relationships is not included in brand love (Batra et al., 2012), but it is included in destination love (mainly via emotional solidarity with locals and anthropomorphism). Finally, concerning Sternberg’s commitment/decision component (decision refers to a person’s *conscious choice* to see their relationship as love and commitment refers to keeping that loving relationship in the long run), decision component is irrelevant to brand (Batra et al., 2012) and destination love, since in brand and destination love consumers/tourists rarely *consciously* choose to define their relationship with a brand as “love” -at least prior to being asked about it by a researcher (Batra et al., 2012). On the other hand, commitment component was proved to be relevant in the context of destination love (long term relationship with destination). However, it should be stressed that Sternberg’s commitment refers to a perceived normative, moral obligation to maintain the relationship *even in the face of a much better alternative* (Batra et al., 2012). Something that it is almost impossible to happen if the poor quality or performance of a loved brand or, in this case, destination becomes undeniable, consumers or tourists would most probably not maintain their love for the brand (Batra et al., 2012) or destination. Therefore, long term relationship construct of destination love is more in line with brand love theory of long-term commitment and loyalty rather than interpersonal love theory.

Moreover, the current study found integration of the loved destination into the tourists’ self (e.g., self-identity, life meaning rewards) to be an absolutely central aspect of destination love, a finding that is in line with object/brand as well as interpersonal love findings concerning self-destination integration (e.g., Lee, 1977; Fournier 1998; Ahuvia 2005; Escalas & Bettman 2005;



Albert, Merunka & Valette-Florence 2008; Batra et al., 2012). Based on Lee's (1977) love typologies, destination love could be suggested that it includes *storge* (friendship love; slowly developing affection and companionship) mainly through emotional solidarity with locals and anthropomorphism, *eros* (romantic-passionate love) through romantic/passionate driven behaviors towards the destination, *agape* (all-giving, selfless love; altruistic love in which the lover views it as his or her duty to love without expectation of reciprocation) via intuitive fit and emotional attachment; and *pragma* [which according to Whang and colleagues (2004: 325) "*represents self-expression and compatibility between self and the beloved, similar to symbolic or conspicuous consumption*"], via self-identity, since it was found that destinations reflect the visitor's values and identity, and thus the compatibility component appears to be relevant to love feelings.

Based on Swanson's (2017) typology of destination brand love, self-destination integration, long term relationship with destination and positive emotional connection with destination could be seen as *philia* (which is a friendship type of love that denotes a strong sense of familiarity and comfort with the destination and an appreciation of the experience it affords), emotional solidarity and anthropomorphism as *storge* and passionate-romantic driven behaviors towards destination as *eros*.

Concerning self-love, it is a tourist's higher self-need to achieve self-actualization, self-fulfillment or/and well being via a loved destination, a novel type of love in the literature (Lykoudi, Zouni & Tsogas, 2020a).

From all the above mentioned, it should be highlighted that destination love theory was found to derive from psychology, marketing and tourism emotion literatures. Moreover, new types/sub-constructs of destination love (e.g., self-love, emotional solidarity, nostalgia, anthropomorphism), as well as refined love (sub)constructs (e.g., self-identity, passion, long term relationship, intuitive fit, life meaning rewards, psychological states and emotional attachment) stemmed from this study, expand the love literature in tourism. This study did not use theories of interpersonal and brand love prior to the research findings in order not to omit important tourism-specific love items. After the destination love items were emerged, parallels were detected



between findings on destination-brand love and destination- interpersonal love, as relevant supporting evidence. In a nutshell, transferring theory and scales from an interpersonal to a brand love context should be considered with great caution by researchers. A careful examination of each item of an interpersonal love scale before its transfer to the brand love research is needed. However, destination love was found to share more similarities than differences especially with interpersonal but also with brand love theories. The same could hold for the transfer of interpersonal and brand love scales to destination love but in lesser extend than that of interpersonal- brand love though.

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### 6.1.2. INDIVIDUALS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE CONCEPTS OF LOVE, LIKE, EMOTIONAL ATTACHMENT AND PASSION

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As it concerns the destination love dimensions, the majority of the participants articulated destination love as a positive emotional connection with destination, self-love and self-destination integration. Moreover, the majority of respondents perceive love as the most emotionally intense and complex concept compared to emotional attachment, passion and like. Furthermore, the striking majority of respondents could differentiate the concept of love from that of emotional attachment (only 10.8% believe that emotional attachment and love are the same concept), passion (only 4.3% think that passion and love are the same concept) and like (only 4% love and like as the same concept).

Concerning how people perceive the concepts of love, like, emotional attachment and passion, results showed that the most emotionally intense concept was found to be love, followed by emotional attachment, passion and like. Participants perceived love as the most complex concept, followed by emotional attachment, passion and like, respectively. Additionally, concerning love and emotional attachment concepts, the majority of the respondents considered that there is an overlap between the concepts of love and emotional attachment, meaning that the concepts are perceived as different but they share some similar features/elements and individuals also perceived that emotional attachment is part of love, meaning that love is a broader concept and includes the emotional attachment concept. Furthermore, concerning love and passion





concepts, the striking majority of the participants perceived that passion is part of love or that love and passion are different concepts but share some common features/elements. Additionally, concerning love and like concepts most of the respondents considered that like and love are distinct concepts and that like and love are different concepts but with some shared characteristics/features. Overall, the striking majority of respondents seemed to be able to differentiate these concepts, which is very important, since it gives confidence that indeed when they defined destination love, they were defining love and not a related concept.

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## 6.2. DISCUSSION OF STUDY 3

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As it concerns destination love, it was found that it is a multi-dimensional construct formed by 7 dimensions: self-love, self-destination integration, emotional solidarity with locals, anthropomorphism, positive emotional connection with destination, passion/romantic driven behavior and long-term relationship with destination.

Anthropomorphism was found to be a part of destination love, although in branding (Rauschnabel & Ahuvia, 2014) and tourism (Aro et al., 2018) it is considered as an antecedent of love. However, it should be stressed that Aro et al. (2018) merely transferred the brand love theory on destinations, without taking into account the different nature of destinations compared to that of brands. Self-love, emotional solidarity with locals and nostalgia (in 3<sup>rd</sup> study as part of self-destination integration) are novel findings in destination love construct. Four dimensions of destination love are in accordance with that of brand love, namely self-destination integration, positive emotional connection, passionate/romantic driven behavior and long-term relationship with destination (Batra et al., 2012). There is a difference though concerning long-term relationship with destination. Even though loyalty is perceived as an outcome of love in the branding literature (e.g., Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006; Batra et al., 2012), as it concerns destination love, loyalty was found to be an inseparable part of it (it is included in the long-term relationship dimension). Batra et al. (2012) perceive loyalty as an outcome of brand love and long-term relationship with brand (which is characterized as an extensive future use and a long-term commitment to it) as a dimension of brand love and thus different from loyalty. In this study loyalty and long





term relationship were perceived and described by tourists as the same concept and thus a unified dimension of destination love. In addition, tourists’ emotional solidarity with locals implies a bidirectional love relationship between tourists and locals, which is in line with interpersonal love theories.

In the following paragraphs the measurement items and scales of each love dimension are presented:

### 6.2.1. SELF-LOVE MEASUREMENT ITEMS AND SCALES

Table 93: self-love measurement scale

Items of Self-love1 (self-confirmation)	Items of Self-love2 (self flourishing & well-being)	Items of Self-love3 (self-tranformation)
Self-appreciation	Self-investment	Self-discovery
Self-definition	Best version of me	Self-fulfillment
Self-stimulation (it stimulates all my senses)	Understand the real values in life	Self-awareness
Self-confidence	Self-balance	Broadening my competences
Self-actualization	Way of thinking	

The results of CFA comply with theory. More specifically, tourists through travelling can fill their higher self needs as well as change or/and create their ‘self’ (Gnoth, 1997; Crang, 2004). Tourists develop and transform their ‘self’ by learning about other people and cultures, or by having challenging experiences (Wearing & Dean, 2003). Every individual is a unique and different entity from each other. Hence, some tourists develop and transform their ‘self’ by learning about other people and cultures, or by having challenging experiences (Wearing & Dean, 2003), while others conceive travelling and tourism as a resource in an attempt to achieve self-actualization and self-realisation, confirming thus their view of the world rather than transforming it (Rojek, 1993). Tourism can be seen as an excellent means of searching the unfamiliar and going beyond the comfort zone, which constitutes a crucial basis for self-



development (Wearing & Dean, 2003). The emerged self love sub-factors follow Bransen's (2006), Rojek's (1993) as well as Wearing's and Dean's (2003) theories. Particularly, self-confirmation, self-transformation/development as well as self-flourishing and well-being were found to exist alone (e.g., some tourists achieve only self-confirmation) or co-exist (e.g., some tourists achieve self-confirmation and well-being; self-transformation and well-being; self-transformation and self-confirmation; self-transformation, self-confirmation and well being) denoting the non-mutually exclusiveness of the concepts, and thus complying with the theory of self in tourism. Hence self-love concerns, among others, the quality of one's own flourishing and well-being (Bransen, 2006), confirmation (Rojek, 1993), or/and transformation (Wearing & Dean, 2003) to the normatively significant features of his/her life as well as it captivates oneself in virtue of the volitional necessity of his/her loving state of mind (Bransen, 2006). It should be stressed that self-expansion items (way of thinking and broadening of competences) were found to load on self-love factor. This comply with the theory as well, since via self-expansion, individuals desire to enhance their potential efficacy (Aron & Aron, 1996; Aron, Aron & Norman, 2001), by acquiring new resources, augmenting existing self-aspects or rediscovering previously neglected parts (Gordon & Luo, 2011) of their self-concept (Lewandowski & Bizzoco, 2007; Nardone, 2012) that at the end will contribute to their goal achievements (Aron, Norman & Aron, 1998). The self is perceived as the content or the knowledge of who we are (Aronson, Wilson, Akert & Fehr, 2007). In the literature, self- expansion has been studied in a romantic relationships context (Mattingly & Lewandowski, 2013). However, according to Mattingly & Lewandowski (2013) self-expansion is not a pure romantic interpersonal phenomenon, rather it can be achieved in a nonrelational domain as well (for instance through hobbies, activities, spiritual experiences and workplace settings). Much like falling in love (Aron et al., 1995), individuals who are participating in new, exciting, and interesting activities can achieve self -expansion through learning new things, acquiring knowledge and obtaining new perspectives, and thus they enhance their ability to accomplish new things (Mattingly & Lewandowski, 2013) and get various intrapersonal benefits (Aron & Aron, 1986; Aron et al., 2013).

As it concerns self-confirmation factor, self can be seen as a set of determinate characteristics or potentialities that await confirmation, whereas self-transformation is



more focused to individual's developed states or activities (Gewirth, 1998). Moreover, self-confirmation can be regarded as automatic, like the natural process of growth. On the contrary, the process of transformation/development is focused more on individual's freedom to decide which potentialities he/she craves to discover or/and develop based on his/her deepest aspirations (Gewirth, 1998; Carr, 2016).

As it concerns self-well being/flourishing, its link with hospitality and leisure is widely established in the academic literature (e.g., Lehto, Brown, Chen & Morrison, 2006; Smith & Puczko, 2008; McCabe, 2009; Voigt, Brown & Howat, 2011; Coghlan, 2015; Sirgy, 2019), since traveling has an impact on tourists' well-being (e.g., McCabe & Johnson, 2013; Uysal, Sirgy, Woo & Kim, 2016; Smith & Diekmann, 2017; Sirgy, 2019). The academic research about the holistic notion of wellbeing, which emphasizes psychological and emotional aspects, and incorporates spirit, body and mind (Smith, 2003; Smith & Puczko, 2010; Hartwell, Fyall, Willis, Page, Ladkin & Hemingway, 2018) appears to be emerging as important in tourism literature (Hartwell, Fyall, Willis, Page, Ladkin & Hemingway, 2018). Flourishing constitutes a combination of feeling good and functioning effectively, and it is a subjective measure of wellbeing. Tourists' wellbeing is not a fixed state, instead it draws on a more intra- and inter-subjective levels functioning via interactions with their loved destination and its tangible as well as intangible elements (e.g., physical space, locals, etc). Individuals, via their loved destination, can reflect on "you at your best", and use their signature strengths (positive traits reflected in the thoughts, feelings, and behaviours of the individuals who possess them) in a new and different way (e.g., way of thinking), elements that could create and have lasting effects on their wellbeing and flourishing (Emmonse & McCollough, 2003; Seligman, Steen, Park & Peterson, 2005; Coghlan, 2015).



## 6.2.2. ANTHROPOMORPHISM & EMOTIONAL SOLIDARITY WITH LOCALS MEASUREMENT ITEMS AND SCALES

Table 94: Anthropomorphism and emotional solidarity measurement scales

Items of IL1 (anthropomorphism)	Items of IL2 (emotional solidarity)
I feel welcomed by the locals	I feel strong connection with locals
Locals are very kind towards me	I feel strong affinity towards the locals
The hospitality in this place is great	I share the same values with the locals
Locals are friendly towards me	I love the people/locals of this place

The findings of CFA comply with theory in tourism field. Nowadays, it is more than obvious that locals and tourists form emotional bonds ,through interactions, shared beliefs as well as shared behaviors, and they are linked to each other , opposing to the past literature that has perceived them as separate from each other (Wearing & Wearing, 2001). More specifically, as it was analyzed in literature review section, a theory approach, which can describe the findings of CFA and thus the development of interpersonal love between tourists and locals is that of anthropomorphism.

In this study, tourists showed a tendency to engage in destination anthropomorphism, as they applied human attributes to destinations (e.g. welcomed, friendly, kind, and hospitable destination through locals). This is in line with findings in marketing literature showing that consumers apply human characteristics, personalities and intentions to brands and products (e.g., Sundar, 2004; Aggarwal & McGill, 2007; Epley et al, 2008; Chandler & Schwarz, 2010; Waytz et al., 2010a; Delbaere et al., 2011; Landwehr et al., 2011; Kervyn et al., 2012; Puzakova et al., 2013; Hart et al, 2013; Rauschnabel & Ahuvia, 2014; MacInnis & Fokes, 2017) especially in the conceptualization and validation of the brand-relationship concept (Fournier, 1998; Alvarez & Fournier, 2016).

It is likely for people, by applying activated human schemas, to develop love emotions or relationships with brands, since they tend to evaluate a humanized entity like a specific brand similar to how they evaluate other people (Kim & McGill 2011;



Aggarwal & McGill 2012) and make brands more appropriate relationship partners, thus promoting and facilitating closer relationships (Rauschnabel & Ahuvia, 2014; Hegner et al., 2017). Consumers who have a strong brand love generally like it as well, whereas consumers can simply like a brand without strongly loving it (Rauschnabel & Ahuvia, 2014). This can be happened because consumers may value the brand's functional quality, but not anthropomorphize it (Rauschnabel & Ahuvia, 2014). Likewise, since destinations are abstract entities and difficult to be fully understood by tourists, they place them in the human category, by giving them characteristics of locals, traits or emotions and see them as people and thus more plausible relationship partners. This human transformation of destinations contributes to tourists' feeling of a bi-directional kind of love between them and the destination.

Another theory approach, which, apart from anthropomorphism, can describe the development of destination love stemming from locals is emotional solidarity theory (e.g., share of similar beliefs and behaviors, interpersonal interaction). Emotional solidarity theory constitutes an emerging theoretical paradigm within the literature of leisure, hospitality and tourism that can help in understanding and clarifying the emotional ties that stem from the interaction between locals and tourists, as well as the degree of emotional proximity experienced within destinations (Woosnam, Aleshinloye, Strzelecka & Erul, 2018).

Hammarstrom (2005) acknowledges emotional solidarity as being the affective bond a person experiences with the other person(s) and is indicated by the perceived emotional closeness and degree of contact. Wallace and Wolf (2006) support that emotional solidarity constitutes a feeling that encompasses a sense of identification with other people as an outcome of a common value system. Interaction among locals and tourists as well as sharing activities, beliefs and behavior can foster great cultural understanding and strengthen ties between locals and tourists (Derrett, 2003; Woosnam & Norman, 2010). Up to now, shared behavior, shared beliefs, and interaction among locals and tourists all have been shown to be significant elements of emotional solidarity (Woosnam, 2011; Woosnam & Aleshinloye, 2013). The findings of emotional solidarity factor are in line with the view of Hammarstrom (2005), Wallace and Wolf (2006) as well as Woosnam and Norman (2010), Woosnam (2011), Woosnam and Aleshinloye (2013), and Woosnam et al. (2014). This study found for the first time that anthropomorphism and emotional solidarity with locals



constitute a significant part of destination love, since both constitute positive sociocultural phenomena and show strong psychometric properties in a love context. Thus, this research effort proposes a different theoretical angle, since it found anthropomorphism and emotional solidarity as focal dimensions of destination love. Tourists' love towards destinations is seen as an emotional connection with locals as well as destinations' warm-hearted anthropomorphic characteristics that tourists form via locals' personalities and characteristics. Anthropomorphisation of loved destination and emotional solidarity with locals may cover the individuals' lower arousal emotions termed "warm hearted" feelings (Richins, 1997) and "affection" (Thomson, MacInnis & Park, 2005), respectively, typical of "companionate love" (Hatfield, 1988).

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### 6.2.3. PASSIONATE/ROMANTIC DRIVEN BEHAVIOR TOWARDS DESTINATION MEASUREMENT ITEMS AND SCALES

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Table 95: Passionate/romantic driven behavior measurement scale

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Items of Passionate/romantic driven Behavior

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I feel passionate about this place

I feel a sense of longing to visit this place

This place triggers my romantic feelings

I feel attracted by this place

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Two of the measurement items (feel passionate and feel a sense of longing) are in accordance with the finding of Batra and colleagues (2012) about passionate driven behavior.



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## 6.2.4. SELF-DESTINATION INTEGRATION MEASUREMENT ITEMS AND SCALES

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Table 96: Nostalgia & frequent thoughts measurement scale

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Items of Nostalgia & Frequent thoughts
I feel nostalgic about this place
I miss this place often
If I could never visit this place again, I would feel miserable
I frequently find myself thinking about visiting this place

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Table 97: Self-identity measurement scale

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Items of self-identity
This place reflects myself
This place helps present myself to others as the person I want to be
This place makes me look like I want to look
This place makes me feel like I want to feel

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Self-identity construct is in line with theory about self-identity (e.g., Grubb & Hupp 1968; Hamm & Cundiff 1969; Sirgy 1980,1982; Batra et al., 2012) and it includes current (this place reflects myself), desired (this place makes me feel like I want to feel, this place makes me look like I want to look) and ideal social (this place helps present myself to others as the person I want to be) self-identity.

Table 98: Life meaning & intrinsic rewards measurement scale

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Items of life meaning & intrinsic rewards
This place makes my life meaningful
This place is inherently important for me
This place has given new perspectives in my life
When I am in this place, I feel like I am home

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3 out of the initial 4 items of life meaning & intrinsic rewards are in line with the theory of Batra et al. (2012), even though initially the item “this place has given new perspectives in my life” thought to be part of “self-expansion” under the self-destination integration dimension. However, theoretically (Batra et al., 2012) and statistically it was proved that it belongs to “life meaning & intrinsic rewards”. This is not strange, since, intrinsic value and self-extension are closely connected, cognitively and linguistically, within the object-love prototype (Batra et al., 2012). The fourth item about “familiarity” also matches with the other three both theoretically and statistically. As it concerns theory, tourists, who have *philia* for a destination, develop high levels of familiarity and comfort with the place and thus an appreciation of the experience felt there (Swanson, 2017). Moreover, familiarity with a destination (e.g., previous visits, same spoken language, familiar food, customs, weather etc) gives tourists confidence (Holloway, 2004). In addition, home can be considered as “intrinsic to our being” and feeling “true to yourself” means doing things that are intrinsically rewarding, at least in Western culture (Batra et al., 2012). Hence, the feeling of familiarity with loved destination makes tourists feel “intrinsic to their being” and appreciate more their destination experiences and this can be considered as an intrinsic reward for tourists.

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### 6.2.5. LONG TERM RELATIONSHIP MEASUREMENT ITEMS AND SCALE

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Table 99: Long term relationship measurement scale

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Items of long term relationship

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I will visit this place the next time I go on vacations

I intend to keep visiting this place

I am a loyal visitor of this place

I expect that this place will be part of my life for a long time

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The measurement items of the long term relationship are in accordance with marketing literature about long term commitment and loyalty (e.g., Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006; Batra et al., 2012). Long term relationship with destination includes both





behavioral and attitudinal items, and thus it is a composite measure, in line with academics' recommendations (e.g., Chen & Gursoy, 2001; Gursoy, Kim & Uysal, 2004; Yoon & Uysal, 2005; Zhang, Fu, Cai & Lu, 2014). *“The behavioral approach is characterized as consumptive behavior, such as sequence of purchase or probability of purchase”* (Patwardhan et al., 2020:5). *“The attitudinal approach refers to tourists' intention to revisit, willingness to recommend, and their psychological commitment”* (Yoon & Uysal, 2005; Zhang et al., 2014; as cited in Patwardhan et al., 2020:5).

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## 6.2.6. POSITIVE EMOTIONAL CONNECTION WITH DESTINATION MEASUREMENT ITEMS AND SCALES

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Table 100: Positive psychological states measurement scale

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Items of Positive psychological states

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I feel happy when I am in this place

I feel harmony when I am in this place

I feel safe in this place

I feel amazed by this place

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*“Tourism experiences may produce positive affect directly in relation to the leisure domain”* (McCabe & Johnson, 2013: 47). Positive psychological states measurement items of destination love are in line with Batra's et al. (2012) descriptions of positive affect. Additionally, feelings of safety/security *“allow one to establish intimacy in a relationship as has been demonstrated in past research”* (Madey & Rodgers, 2009: 81). Various academics (e.g., Sirakaya, Sheppard & McLellan, 1997; Artuğer, 2015; Woosnam et al., 2015; Sohn, Lee & Yoon, 2016; Ribeiro et al., 2018; Patwardhan et al., 2020) have stressed the necessity of the inclusion of perceived safety in the tourists' behavior domains, and this study contributes with empirical evidence on this argument.



Table 101: Intuitive fit measurement scale

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Items of natural/intuitive fit

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I love the uniqueness of the place

I feel psychologically comfortable when being in this place

I do care about the place

This place meets my needs perfectly

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The CFA results of natural/intuitive factor comply with previous theory on love (e.g., Albert et al., 2008; Batra et al., 2012). More specifically, Batra et al. (2012) include “*feel psychologically comfortable*” and “*it meets my needs perfectly*” in their intuition fit description about brand love, and Albert et al. (2008) found “*uniqueness*” as an important element of love. Tourists develop love for a destination, if this place imbues unique characteristics, which make the destination to morph into their respective self-concepts and they may develop a self-brand connection (Kemp et al., 2012). As, it concerns most favorite destinations, some tourists claimed that they do care about the place itself, which means for example that they make donations to the destination for its natural and cultural preservation or by contributing voluntarily to preserve it, stemming from their natural/intuitive fit with destination (e.g., cleaning beaches, forests or in general taking care of its flora, fauna and culture).

Table 102: Emotional attachment measurement scale

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Items of Emotional attachment

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I feel emotionally attached with this place

No other place can provide the same holiday experience as this destination

This destination is the best place for what I like to do during my holidays

I would not substitute this place for any other place

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The final measurement items of the destination emotional attachment construct are in accordance with that in the literature (e.g., Yuksel, Yuksel, & Bilim, 2010; Su, Cheng & Huang, 2011; Batra et al., 2012).



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## 6.2.7.SEGMENTATION (BASED ON DEMOGRAPHICS)

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From the results of the third study, it is shown that overall, as it concerns the nationality of the participants, it *cuts almost uniformly* across all destination love constructs. Only Scandinavians (very restricted sample size for each Scandinavian country) do not follow the same overall destination love pattern as all other nationalities do so far. It was found that the majority of Scandinavians do not develop love towards their most favorite destination. This finding is in line with Aro's et al. (2018: 73) explanation that "*Finnish may not say that they love something as easily as, for example, consumers in the USA*". Aro et al. (2018) also stress the possibility for potential cultural differences in the use of the word "love" in Finland and in the USA. Even though in the study of Aro et al. (2018), Finnish did not verbally expressed love for a destination brand, they did state that they felt an attachment to the specific destination brand.

Moreover, participants of all age ranges displayed type(s) of love towards their most favorite/preferable destination, but individuals of age 15-18 years predominately did not display destination love. In general, it seems that older individuals tend to develop love towards destinations. This could be explained by the fact that human growth (and thus emotional growth) is associated with adult maturity and that higher (travel) motives or/and complex emotions are felt or are stronger for older versus younger adults (e.g., Lee, 1977; Reiss & Havercamp, 2005; Steptoe, et al., 2015; Lykoudi et al., 2020a). This finding is in line with that of study 1 and study 2. In addition, no major gender discrepancies were found in the third study concerning the dimensions/types of destination love. This shows that destination love types cut almost uniformly across males and females (some slight differences are pinpointed in the following paragraphs); men and women from different cultural and ethnic settings seem to have similar destination love perceptions and thus they are analogous to the findings of Doherty and colleagues (1994) study about love. Furthermore, education might be one of the demographic variables to distinguish destination-lovers (in line with studies 1 and 2). Even though the majority of individuals across all educational levels displayed love towards their most favorite destination, students and people of basic education tend to love in a lesser extend their most favorite destination



compared to the highly educated segments. This finding is consistent with that of other researchers who postulate that a more educated individual would potentially have psychological access to more advanced and more committed relationships (Elder & Rockwell, 1979) in different contexts (eg, Carland et. al., 1995). What's more, the majority of destination lovers are of high monthly income (more than 2000 euros per month). Even though no previous research can be found to correlate love with higher income, it must be noted that income is related with higher educational level and age in tourism (e.g., Björk & Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2016), a result found in the third study (in line with studies 1 & 2 as well).

## 6.3. DISCUSSION OF THE DESTINATION LOVE MODEL

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Destination love model is a reflective-formative third order model, since its first-order, reflective, constructs represent a particular '*phenomenon*' (e.g., Bagozzi, 2011) or '*feeling*' felt with or experienced at a destination. Furthermore, the second order latent variables of the model are abstract amalgamations of the initial feelings and are formed *ad hoc* each time a destination appears in tourists' senses (visits, sees, hears about, etc.). In the same sense, the higher order of '*Destination love*' is formed as the integrative sum of all *relevant* feelings generated *at* and *by* a destination. Thus, the higher order constructs of destination love and ultimately destination love construct, was perceived as formative, since, due to its universality and cultural diversity base, the empirical meaning of destination love is global. "*That is, empirical meaning and the estimates of formative loadings are in a sense spread out across the model*" (Bagozzi, 2011: 266). The formative reasoning of destination love was additionally relied on the initial tourists' descriptions and articulations of destination love that showed the universality of its various aspects, although slight socio-cultural differences existed and influenced both the display and feeling rules, which could have been applied to tourists' emotional spontaneity and expressive display in total, as well as to the feeling and displaying of tourists' love emotions in specific destination settings. Individuals of different socio-cultural backgrounds gave their own



categorization on destination love and imposed universal categories, as well as differentiated expressions of love that were ultimately seen as “*dialects*” of the “*more universal grammar of love*” (Tomkins & McCarter, 1964: 127). Furthermore, the formative reasoning of destination love was supported by the fact that while the dimensions that evoke love are felt across diverse destinations, these dimensions are nuanced, expressed and manifested quite differently for each destination and each person. Each destination evokes a distinct mixture of love manifestations to each individual. Accordingly, each person develops a unique mixture of love manifestations towards his/her favorite destination(s), since destination love is a complex, multifaceted and subjective, inner phenomenon.

The higher-order prototype model of destination love found with PLS-SEM analysis adds more value compared to the individual dimensions in several ways.

(1) First of all, the individual dimensions/types of destination love, as stand-alone theoretical constructs of love, surely add value in the literature, but give a more fragmented perception of destination love and do not capture the whole picture. On the other hand, the higher-order destination love model leads to a much more comprehensive and integrated understanding of how tourists actually perceive and experience destination love.

(2) Furthermore, the whole procedure of this study’s methodology from being more abstract and open (studies 1 and 2) to being more specific (study 3) denoted how survey data on a novel concept such as destination love can be collected and modeled structurally, and showed how emerged love items can be used to form lower-level concrete sub-components and how these components subsequently can build and develop higher-level and more abstract tourists’ concepts, like that of destination love. For example, it showed the “pathways” through which tourists may form a self-love emotion through a destination: the association of the destination with various types of self and higher self-needs and specifically the sensing of a self-confirmation and well-being as well as the self-transformation and development via destination.

(3) Additionally, the final higher order destination love model gives more insights into the situationally-varying assessment of which love construct/dimension or sub-construct may have the strongest impact (t-values) on the overall strength of felt destination love. For example, structural model paths were highest for self-love (49,877), and Positive Emotional Connection (43,284), and much lower for emotional



solidarity with locals (13,911). Such diagnostic insight is useful theoretically and managerially (Batra et al., 2012).



# CONTRIBUTION, LIMITATIONS & FURTHER RESEARCH

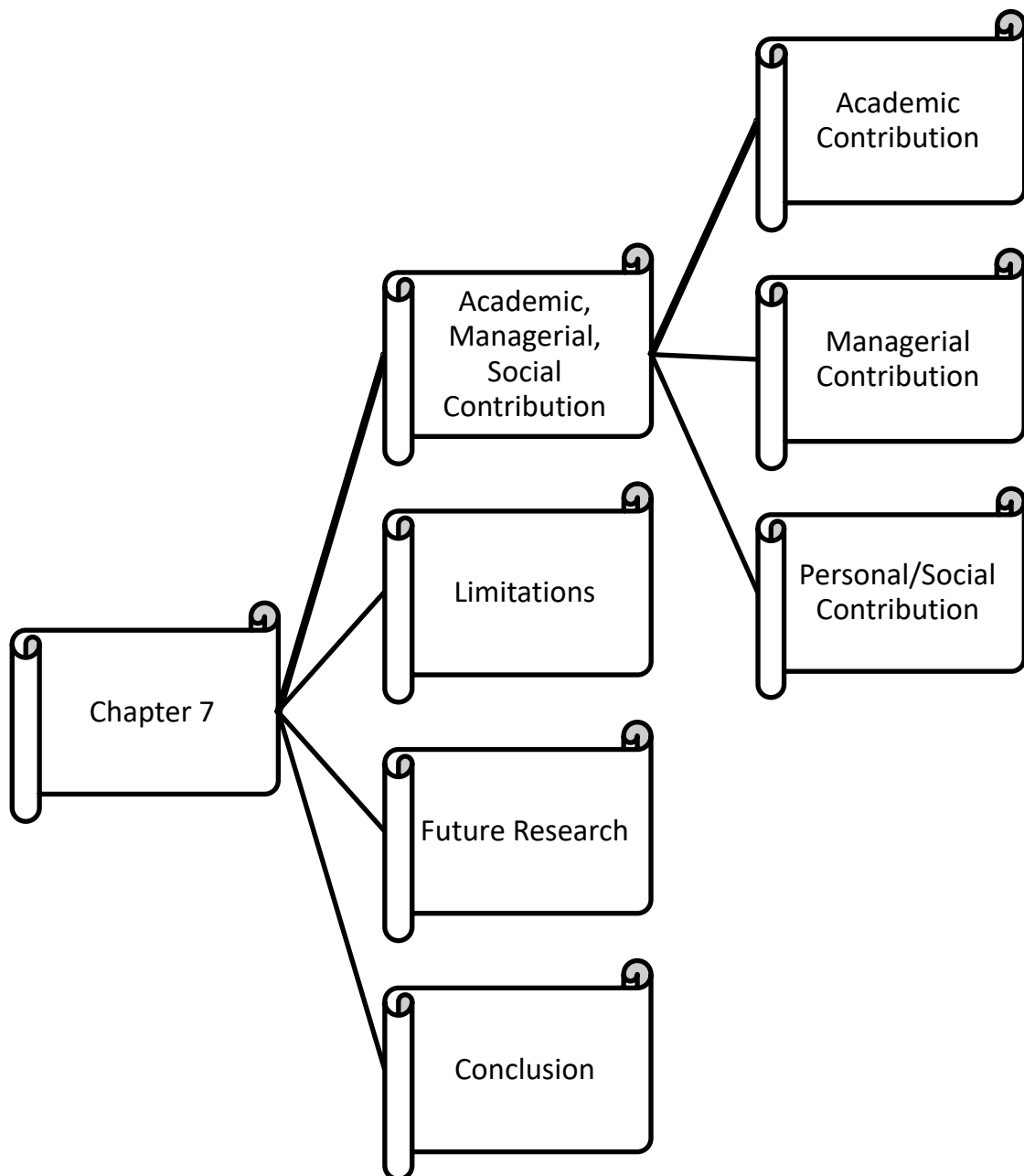
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# CHAPTER SEVEN: ACADEMIC AND MANAGERIAL CONTRIBUTION, LIMITATIONS, FUTURE RESEARCH AND CONCLUSION

## PREVIEW OF CHAPTER SEVEN







After having presented the data analyses, data interpretation and discussion of the findings, this study reaches to implications, limitations, future research directions and conclusion via the comprehensive and elaborative depiction of the theoretical and research framework that emerged from the process described in the previous chapters. This chapter deals with how the study's findings can be important for tourism marketers and academics. Furthermore, the suggested implications and future research directions are substantiated by theoretical and methodological evidence .

## 7.1. ACADEMIC, MANAGERIAL AND SOCIAL CONTRIBUTION

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Destination love model was found to be a highly inclusive model that encompasses not only emotional facets, but also behavioral ties and cognitive beliefs or a mix of them. The results of this study can be generalized, since the model was stemmed from i) a great variety of multicultural respondents in three independent samples and ii) a universal research approach, concerning multiple destinations across the world, so that it adds to the robustness of the findings (Yin, 2009; Swanson, Medway & Warnaby, 2015). Moreover, the universality of the destination love measurement scales reflects their generalization in tourism destinations, by setting a universal framework with the possibility of items adjustment with respect to destination-specific characteristics. In this way, it is secured, apart from validity, that the design and implementation of the proposed destination love measurement scales will be relevant to each destination's specific features.

Given the importance of love in tourism and marketing, the contribution of this research effort in the literature is three-fold: 1) using a rigorous theoretical and scale development methodology, it is proposed for the first time a universal, integrative approach of love for tourism marketing, 2) contributing to a deeper and better understanding of destination love, the researcher proposes seven distinct dimensions of destination love that introduce a new research area in tourist- destination bonds and add up to the discourse of an emotional birth of constructive values that is apparently rather absent in tourism literature, and 3) validating the nomological network of the destination love scale, the researcher corroborates with previous studies regarding the



interrelationships among satisfaction, love and word of mouth. Several valuable theoretical and managerial implications resulted from the study and are analyzed below.

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### 7.1.1. ACADEMIC IMPLICATIONS

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This research effort contributes to a deeper and better comprehension of destination love that opens up a new research area in affective attunements and certainly adds up to the discourse of an emotional birth of constructive values that is apparently rather absent in tourism literature. The key academic contribution of the present study is that it adds to the relatively small amount of tourism research that examines the construct of love for understanding human-place bonds and provides both theoretical and empirical evidence for the concept of “destination love”. Furthermore, this study offers a universal perspective on tourism and marketing studies, as the majority of the academic studies on “destination *brand* love” and “brand love” occurs in specific places and cultures (e.g., Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006; Albert et al., 2008; Batra et al., 2012; Swanson, 2017; Christou, 2018; Aro et al., 2018; Andriotis et al., 2020).

The academic value of this research is profound, since not only does this research effort differs from prior studies on love in tourism destinations, but also extends the relevant literature in seven important dimensions. In particular:

1. First, this research effort builds emotion and relational theory in the field of tourism. Generally, tourism studies lack of genuine research for theory development (e.g., Rogozinski, 1985; Jovicic, 1988; Comic, 1989), since they usually apply already entrenched theories from other academic fields, like in the case of destination *brand* love. This study is the first in tourism to perceive destination love as a universal (not destination-specific and not a single/specific destination brand), and thus a broader concept than destination brand love. Up to now, all existing studies of love in tourism context are based on specific destinations (destination brand love) and/or already entrenched conceptualizations in love, denoting a narrow perspective in tourism research with respect to the complexity, universality, and tourism-specific nature of destination love concept. This fragmented view has resulted in a substantial lack of tourism destination love types. This study contributes to this identified gap in the



literature by adopting and providing a broader love research stance, which incorporates the complex, universal, and tourism-specific nature of love. Additionally, this study covers more broadly the need of a larger, multicultural and diverse sample composition since up until now, almost all studies on love in tourism have used smaller samples (e.g., Swanson, 2017, Aro et al., 2018; Christou, 2018) with less cultural diversity (e.g., Christou, 2018) or no cultural diversity (e.g., Lee & Hyun, 2016; Swanson, 2017; Aro et al., 2018). Analogous to the view of Barker and colleagues (2015) on brand love, this study considers that love in a specific destination cannot be seen as the end game; instead destination love should be seen as universal, surpassing all manner of specific destinations and existing conceptualizations in other contexts. Hence, this dissertation adds to the extremely under-researched and new notion of ‘love’ in the tourism field, and helps in understanding further the human-place emotional attunement. The contribution to the growing tourism literature on emotions is evident, but also to the extension of the literature regarding the implementation of the concept of destination love as a way of attracting and retaining tourists. This research effort investigated the concept of destination love and suggested the various dimensions and measurement items that compose it. Moreover, it revealed how tourists describe destination love as well as which types of tourists develop different types of destination love. Each individual is a unique entity and can get different feelings from different destinations. This results in the development of a unique mixture of love manifestations towards each most favorite/loved destination. Each person “weights” differently the love items with respect to each favorite destination and thus he/she could display different love emotions in different destination settings. For instance, a tourist can display passionate behavior towards Greece and develop long-term commitment and emotional attachment towards Italy. Accordingly, each destination evokes different love feelings to different individuals. For example, Greece can evoke self-transformation and positive psychological states for a person and nostalgia, intuitive fit and life meaning rewards for another person. The highly subjective and individualistic nature of the tourist experience is gaining appreciation recently and this dissertation stresses that tourists’ emotional experience and especially love is not something that could be ‘stage-managed’ by the service provider, but rather tourists



aid in the production of their own experiences and emotions through their personal characteristics and the agendas they bring with them to the tourist encounters.

2. Second, this research is the first attempt to define and operationalize destination love in tourism and marketing literatures. Unlike previous research in tourism field that has focused mainly qualitatively on love (destination *brand* love), this research encompasses both qualitative and quantitative methods. On the other hand, the vast majority of brand love studies is based on quantitative and survey-based analyses that are not enough to capture an inherently complex phenomenon such as love. Thus this study combined both qualitative and quantitative research methods in order to tap into certain aspects of destination love that might be outside of the direct awareness of people, and hence harder to capture using only either qualitative or quantitative survey tools.

3. Thirdly, this study is the first to build and develop an extensive multiple-item and multi-dimensional measure of destination love, as well as a uniform gauge of evaluations and valid methodology for destination love. This dissertation provides a consistent and robust model that refines our understanding of this complex emotion in marketing. Specifically, destination love measurement items help in construct as well as measurement scales building and lead to a much more comprehensive and integrated understanding of how tourists actually define and experience destination love at a tourism destination. From a methodological point of view, the proposed framework supports the dynamic definition of destination love and its sub-constructs. Academics who are going to investigate the love concept in specific destination types (e.g., heritage, gastronomic, agricultural destinations) could use the measurement items found here adjusted on the specific destination characteristics, without causing any essential change in the destination love framework structure, which remains rather unchanged, since it is the backbone of love in tourism, because of its universality. From all the above mentioned, it is clear that the dynamic and flexible nature of the destination love measurement scales reflects their generalization as well. Destination love universality reflects its generalized framework in love for tourism destinations, while at the same time it provides the possibility for the adjustment of this study's proposed items (first order) in destination-specific characteristics. In this



way, it is secured, apart from validity, that the design and implementation of the proposed destination love measurement scales will be relevant to each destination's specific features.

4. In addition, this dissertation answers whether destination love is universal or cultural specific and which tourist segments develop each dimension or sub-dimension of destination love. The present study found that destination love cuts almost universally among different cultures (nationalities), -since people from all nationalities articulated and perceived destination love similarly (all dimensions of destination love were mentioned from all nationalities)- and provided empirical evidence for the profile of tourists who develop the seven types of destination love. The findings signify the need to investigate the socio-demographic and behavioral composition of these tourists' segments in tourism destinations in order to shed some light on the aspects of destination love development in tourism contexts. Although romantic love research indicates that cultural and socio-demographic variables affect how people define and experience love (Erber & Erber, 2016), in the present dissertation, people from different social and demographic backgrounds perceived destination love in a similar way, although there were some slight differences concerning the individual dimensions of destination love. This study pinpointed these slight differences regarding to how people of differing demographic and behavioral characteristics perceive each dimension/type of destination love.

5. Not only this study gives insights into the novel and under-researched notion of destination love, but also into its similarities/differences to already entrenched love notions such as brand love and interpersonal love. This research examined for the first time the commonalities and differences among different kinds of love (interpersonal versus destination versus brand love) with respect to objectivity, emotional intensity, vagueness and complexity criteria. Hence, it certainly sheds light on individuals' mental prototypes that present a major challenge in the marketing literature, since they are perceived tacit knowledge structures and hence they cannot be easily explained. In tourism, although destination love encompasses a way higher emotional intensity compared to that of brand love, it has escaped tourism academics' attention. Branding literature in general could be substantially benefited by exploring



destination love characteristics that could ensure the quality and emotional aspect of the entire consumer experience. Specifically, consideration should be given to carefully transmit, where possible, the benefits and psychological outcomes of destination love to brand love, such as (a) direct experience (immediate) which includes happiness, harmony, entertainment, relaxation, excitement, (b) experiential learning which has an impact on the improvement of abilities and knowledge, but also on the physical and psychological health of individuals; (c) personal well being and development that is most concerned with personal concern for self-expansion, self-fulfillment, self-determination and personality confirmation of individuals; and (d) human element interaction between brand employees and consumers can function as a main conduit for the development or enhancement of brand love.

6. For academics, looking at the sub-dimensions of destination love construct is a valuable, and sometimes a crucial approach to theory development and testing (e.g., Rauschnabel & Ahuvia, 2014; Bagozzi, Batra & Ahuvia, 2016). For instance, it could be useful to recall that higher-order constructs such as destination love have no existence that is independent of their subdimensions (Bagozzi, Batra & Ahuvia, 2016). If another construct interacts with destination love, it must be interacting with one or more of destination love's subdimensions (Bagozzi, Batra & Ahuvia, 2016). Hence, it will be hard to yield substantial theoretical explanations of how destination love interacts with other constructs without being able to measure each of destination love's subdimensions (Bagozzi, Batra & Ahuvia, 2016).

7. This study developed and validated for the first time the destination love scales. In doing so, it confirmed the reliability, validity and usefulness of the destination love construct organized as a mental prototype and proved that it can be predicted by satisfaction and it can subsequently predict WOM. These new destination love scales could facilitate future research into destination issues, in general, and help in hypotheses testing where destination love is focal.



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## 7.1.2. MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

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The crucial managerial question of this study is how destination marketers can transform liked destinations into loved destinations where visitors create love emotions and keep that relationship over time. The main managerial implications can be summarised as follows:

1. Firstly, by understanding the significance of love in tourism field, tourism marketers may be able to determine the role of love dimensions in the marketing of their destinations. More specifically, this study can enable destination managers to identify (new) tourism segments that will be more prone to develop love towards their destination and approach them with targeted marketing tactics that will motivate visitors to emotionally engage more with the destination. The hierarchical overall destination love model can help tourism professionals in understanding the meaning of each love construct in order to evaluate how, collectively and individually, they contribute to the creation, development and perception of destination love. The destination love model provides a tool for destination experts in helping them with practical guidance that assists to identify, which love elements could match with their destination and thus should be considered

- in developing their destination brand, and, more importantly, in understanding why and how these love elements have managerial significance
- in evaluating how destination love dimensions can be targeted - through marketing communications as well as via destination product and service design in order to enhance tourists' meaningful emotional experiences and tourists' more abstract perceptions that form their emotion of destination love.

For tourism marketers, assessing their destinations with respect to all destination love dimensions can give them insights into spotting opportunities and threats that would have remained unnoticed had they applied a single dimensional measure of destination love, since overall assessment of multiple dimensions provides more insights and diagnostics (e.g., Bagozzi et al., 2016).

2. However, even though the hierarchical destination model can give more insights into overall destination love, tourism marketers and professionals could also assess their destination with respect to each destination love (lower-level) dimensions and





conclude what type(s) of love can be stemmed from their destination based on destination-specific features and attributes. After all, every destination is a distinct entity with unique characteristics, products and services and thus could trigger the development of specific type(s) of love. This study give insights into destination marketers so that they are able to distinguish love types that mostly characterize and are unique to their destination. By understanding more about the extent to which love is rooted in destinations, tourism destination managers may be able to determine the role of love dimensions in the marketing of their destinations.

Particularly, tourism experts should research and assess their destination in relation to the different destination love types. Via this assessment, tourism experts could spot opportunities, identify new tourists' segments and expand their tourism market. Findings show that tourists could be differentiated by their love types development towards destinations.

To some extend, countries like Portugal and Taiwan have already highlighted the emotional dimensions of their destination offerings. For instance, Portugal positions its destination offerings as a variety of passionate and romantic experiences and emphasizes that tourists can "*feel the passion*" throughout the country (Hosany & Prayag, 2013). Furthermore, "*Taiwan successfully uses the slogan "touch your heart" to convey a sense of warmth among potential tourists*" (Hosany & Prayag, 2013:735). Loved destinations seemed to come from the heart and mind of tourists, who experience destination love in varying ways, even for the same destination. Hence, selective tourism marketing techniques are feasible only if destination lovers segments and their socio-demographic as well as behavioral characteristics are clearly indicated since this allows tourism experts to '*develop a better understanding of distinct tourist characteristics and for developing marketing strategies*' (Park, Yang, Lee, & Stokowski, 2002: 55).

Practically, the findings of this study could help destination marketers to reveal schemas, descriptions, narratives, and symbols that may be used to design and implement the destination marketing strategy:

- a) For instance, the implementation of effective promotional and sophisticated activities targeted at (potential) *self-lovers* requires a sound comprehension of this type of tourists. Managerial targeted strategies can be adopted by destination managers in designing and planning their destination business





focused on satisfying the self-lovers' inner higher needs based on their individual characteristics, which were found and analyzed in this study. Additionally, destination managers could also create self higher need's activities and slogans that inspire self-lovers for their future visitation. Self-love emotion could also be developed via the creation of active and tightly knit self-lovers destination communities on social media for tourists' connection and (intellectual) interaction, as well as destination presence at emotionally meaningful events such as tourism exhibitions and travel festivals which could be organized in the countries of self-lovers (Lykoudi, Zouni & Tsogas, 2020).

- b) Moreover, tourism marketers, in order to facilitate *passion/romantic-driven behaviors* towards their destination, need to build tourists' strong *desire to visit it*, by developing a strong, visceral sense of passion for destination products, services and experiences. Destination managers should capitalize on individuals' passion towards their destination to ensure that their destination service and product provision is consistent with tourists' emotional needs, desires and expectations. High levels of tourists' passion towards their destination constitute an asset for the destination. Destination experts should build, offer and deliver passionate and romantic tourism experiences that are aligned with the recognition and nurturing of that asset. For example, individuals' strong passion towards ancient history and philosophy should set the basis for heritage local destination managers to well-direct their heritage development strategies, as well as adapt their tourism marketing efforts towards cultivating and acknowledging the high levels of passion that tourists have towards history and culture.
- c) Furthermore, building destination brands that symbolize *self-destination integration* should encompass tourism destination's ability to express the targeted tourists' actual and desired identities, as well as provide life's deeper meanings and intrinsic rewards, by connecting it to social betterment or to nostalgic appeals and memorable experiences. To create a love relationship with their visitors, destination marketers need to develop visitors' identity-related experiences and thus assume a visitor-oriented perspective when defining the destination personality and identity by taking the visitors' selves



into consideration. This is very important, since when tourists' self-identity is connected to a destination, the entity behind the destination brand can be able to achieve a sustainable competitive advantage (Kemp et al., 2012). In particular, when individuals develop a self-destination connection, the destination becomes less vulnerable to tourist attitude change (Escalas & Bettman, 2003; Kemp et al., 2012). Tourists whose identities match with destination's characteristics may be more forgiving of marketing errors, such as poorly executed advertising campaigns and less likely to engage in switching behavior (Escalas & Bettman, 2003, Kemp et al., 2012). Thus, destination marketers should try to enable tourists to feel an identification with the destination, by designing and offering a destination image or personality that appeals to tourists' actual and desired identity. Marketing communications may also emphasize activities and domains with which the targeted tourist segment(s) feels a strong sense of identity or involvement, such as familiarity. Briefly, it is essential that the destination marketers deeply understand the significant role of meaningful destination experiences as well as stories that are stored in the visitor's memory, which in turn reflect the identification-elevating factors consisted of life meaning values system, nostalgia and self-identity schemata. Based on this deeper understanding, destination marketing managers are enabled to plan more efficiently their strategies in order to enhance tourists' integration with destination and thus create or amplify destination love. The targeted messages and activities stemming from the appropriate marketing strategies could aim to establish tourists'-destination integration by evoking tourists' memory and thoughts. Such integration could stimulate the tourist's imagination to transform destination into memorable schemas and life meaningful emotional experiences that ultimately become an integral part of their self and life stories. Thus, the tourists will not only savor what is experienced during their visit at destination, but also enjoy the memories of their visit when being at home. Tourists' integration with destination is about destination getting deep inside into tourist's heart and mind. Consequently, destination marketers could transform their destination into a place full of memorable symbolic and emotional referents, serving to enhance tourist's nostalgia, life meaning rewards and identity. For instance,



destination marketing communication can “remind” tourists of a destination’s connection with nostalgic memories (e.g., family vacations- childhood references) in order to create identification-inducing memories. The capability of destination marketer to forge such identification will influence tourist’s love development/ enhancement/ maintenance towards the destination.

- d) In addition, creating *positive emotional connections* with the destination is broader than just positive feelings, since it includes a sense of attachment, positive psychological states and an intuitive feeling of “soundness and rightness” about the destination. This could be achieved by endowing the destination with a sense of uniqueness from its culture, people and history, so that the destination buyer feels a sense of “kinship” about it. Further, tourism destinations could focus on enhancing tourists’ experiential processes, by providing and stimulating them with emotional experiences, so that positive psychological states and emotions, such as harmony, safety, enthusiasm and happiness emotions are evoked, and thus love is developed. Destinations may use these emotions in their promotional campaigns. Moreover, destination marketing efforts would also be well-directed towards acknowledging and cultivating the high levels of emotional attachment that tourists have towards their loved destination. For example, destination marketers could follow an one to one marketing in their destination branding efforts. The focus should be not only on positive psychological states such as happiness, harmony and safety, but also on emotional attachment and intuitive fit that are induced by the consumption of destination products, services and experiences. Emphasizing the destination brand customization to a tourist’s idiosyncratic needs and preferences offers an opportunity to establish emotional bonding and, thus, set the basis to spread positive Word Of Mouth from destination lovers to other tourists.
- e) Since destination lovers are found to be repeat visitors of their most favorite destination, repeat visitation could be further strengthened by securing high-quality experiences and loyalty programs, which should emphasize on intrinsic over extrinsic motives and life meaning rewards that require frequent and ongoing interaction. For example, both to attract and enhance the volume of repeat self-love visitors, destination managers could focus on increasing the



sense of self-transformation, confirmation or/and well being as well as tourists' possible sophisticated and intellectual experiences/activities at the destination. One possible method could be fostering tourists' higher needs by providing informative panels or an application presenting destination specific services or learning experiences/activities that would help them stimulate their mind and senses, contributing to their personal growth (Lykoudi, Zouni & Tsogas, 2020a). Additionally, an *extended use strategy* could be applied by destination experts in order to boost tourists' repeat visitation by increasing the frequency of destination use among existing visitors (e.g., encourage visitors to stay longer at destination by offering them discounts based on the number of days they plan to spend at destination, the longer they stay, the higher the discount).

- f) Moreover, tourism marketers, in order to create tourists' destination love, could work upon reinforcing their destination brand image or slogans by implementing *human characteristics*, such as a heart-warming destination, lovable destination, hospitable or welcome destination so that feed tourists' need for *anthropomorphism*. Additionally, destination marketers can launch a destination application or page on social media (such as facebook, twitter and instagram), and thus directly interact with tourists. Posting and discussing "*as a destination*" with tourists (and not, for instance, as a destination manager/promotion representative) could be an additional way of enhancing *destination anthropomorphism*. Locals could also further reinforce destination anthropomorphism by posting and discussing about their place beauty and unique characteristics on destination's social media and thus interact directly with (potential) visitors. By the same token, the important and elevated role of the destination brand employees and locals as "*human assets of love*" of the destination brand should be highlighted in the *co-cremotion* (create+emotion) process. The destination brand employees as well as the locals with their behaviours "*humanize*" the destination brand and could function as the cornerstones of tourists' destination love creation. Such a "humanization" of destination can cultivate a strong destination advocacy through word-of-mouth communication. Subsequently, internal buy-in of a destination's



branding efforts from employees and local residents can promote greater synergy destination's branding strategy.

For this reason, destination planners and marketers in order to build tourists' love emotion/relationships with destination, they should invest and focus on fostering positive relationships and interaction between locals and visitors of the destination. The involvement of locals in the destination planning and operational stages could help or even ensure a better interaction and communication with destination visitors. Increasing opportunities for locals-tourists interaction at key destination attractions, the creation of an online active and tightly knit destination community on social media for enhancing and facilitating tourists-locals connection and interaction all year round as well as planning special local events and festivals are just some practical examples about how tourism destination organizations can strengthen such tourists-locals interpersonal relationships and thus destination love. Moreover, common social activities between locals and tourists could strengthen visitors' feeling of acceptance by the destination community (e.g., residents, employees) and thus their sense of belonging to this place.

The above mentioned offline and online practical examples can trigger interpersonal interaction between visitors and locals and also allow the destination marketers to measure and monitor the results. From this vein, the role of social media in the destination marketing strategy is shifted and destination marketers can exploit them as emotional solidarity builders and a "*co-cremotion*" medium rather than another platform for promoting or broadcasting destination brand messages. At the same time, new marketing roles can be introduced, related to the tourists' interaction with the destination community, as a result of understanding the urgency for reciprocity and interpersonal relationships. On the same token, the enhancement of locals' knowledge about their destination uniqueness/values and how they can be transformed in destination ambassadors could be very useful to destination marketers as it can give a competitive advantage in the tourism market. This dissertation found that locals constitute a vital aspect of destination love. Destination marketers should recognize locals' (potential) role in delivering the destination brand values by personally reflecting the destination core



values and influencing the tourists' experience at the destination (e.g., hospitality, kindness, helpful guidance for practical issues at destination, destination's rich-informative guides etc). After all, destination experts should capitalize on locals' detailed first-hand knowledge of their destination (Zenker, Braun & Petersen, 2017), which could be naturally perceived as more authentic, informal, and the most believable insider sources of information about the destination (Strandberg & Styvén, 2019). Hence destination marketing strategies that include locals in the destination brand building process, could yield in destination's brand differentiation and thus give a competitive advantage in the market.

For instance, Washington recruited their local residents for their assistance in promoting the State (Kemp et al., 2012). Locals were asked to send email postcards of various tourist attractions throughout the State to their relatives, friends and acquaintances (Hoang, 2011). In a similar vein, locals in Florida were asked to "Share a Little Sunshine" by sending customized email postcards or free video invitations to families and friends (Morgan, 2010). Finally, the recruitment and training criteria of the first line personnel at destination in every tourism service provider unit can be revised to ensure that high value experiential standards are offered to visitors so that they will strengthen their urge to form an emotional bond with destination.

All in all, it is essential for destination marketers, who want to build their visitors' love relationship with destination for a long time, to understand what type(s) of love its potential and current visitors develop, as destination love comes in different types. This can give a competitive advantage of the destination (brand) in the tourism market and guide destination brand managers to create or highlight these destination offerings (product, services, experiences) that can form tourists' love, with respect to each love type or a combination of them.

3. This study built the *socio-demographic* and *behavioral* profile of tourists who develop each destination love dimension as well as destination love as a whole. Thus the findings of this dissertation provide tourism experts with a segmentation framework that could help them identify the market segments that are more possible



to develop love towards their destination, and subsequently give them insights into effective methods to successfully target and position their destination in the mind and hearts of destination lovers by designing their marketing strategy.

Table 103: educational level and love constructs

	Basic level	students	University/ College graduates	Master graduates	Ph.D
Self-identity		✓		✓	
Life-meaning rewards					✓
Nostalgia & frequent thoughts					✓
Self-confirmation			✓		✓
Well-being					✓
Self-transformation			✓		✓
Anthropomorphism	✓	✓		✓	
Emotional solidarity				✓	
Emotional attachment				✓	✓
Intuitive fit				✓	
Positive psychological states	✓	✓			
Passion			✓		
Long-term relationship			✓		

Based on the tourists' educational level, Table 103 that summarizes the results of this dissertation could give tourism marketers useful insights for their marketing strategy. Individuals of basic educational level are more prone to develop anthropomorphism and positive psychological states towards a destination, whereas PhD graduates tend



to develop self-love, life meaning rewards, nostalgia and emotional attachment. Further details for each educational level segment with respect to love constructs are shown in Table 103.

Table 104: Average monthly income and love constructs

	Under 1000 euros	1000-1999 euros	2000-2999 euros	3000-5000 euros	More than 5000 euros
Self-identity	✓			✓	
Life-meaning rewards			✓		
Nostalgia & frequent thoughts			✓		✓
Self-confirmation					✓
Well-being					✓
Self-transformation					✓
Anthropomorphism		✓			
Emotional solidarity			✓		✓
Emotional attachment			✓	✓	
Intuitive fit				✓	
Positive psychological states		✓			
Passion		✓			
Long-term relationship	✓		✓		

Details for each monthly income segment with respect to love constructs are shown in Table 104. Travellers of highest monthly income (more than 5000 euros per month) tend to score higher on self-love (self-confirmation, well-being and self-transformation), nostalgia as well as emotional solidarity with locals. On the other





hand, individuals of lowest monthly income (under 1000 euros per month) tend to score higher on long-term relationship with a destination and self-identity.

Table 105: Age and love constructs

	15-18	19-25	26-35	36-45	46-55	56 or more
Self-identity		✓	✓			
Life-meaning rewards					✓	
Nostalgia & frequent thoughts			✓			✓
Self-confirmation			✓	✓		
Well-being			✓	✓	✓	
Self-transformation			✓			
Anthropomorphism	✓					✓
Emotional solidarity				✓	✓	✓
Emotional attachment			✓	✓		
Intuitive fit					✓	✓
Positive psychological states	✓	✓			✓	
Passion	✓	✓				
Long-term relationship		✓	✓	✓		

Details for each age segment with respect to love constructs are shown in table 105. Based on age, tourism professionals could gain useful insights for planning their destination strategy, since tourists who fall into the highest age range (56 or more years old) tend to score higher on emotional solidarity with locals, anthropomorphism, intuitive fit and nostalgia, whereas young tourists, who are 19-25 years old tend to score higher on long-term relationship with the most favorite



destination, self-identity, positive psychological states and passionate-romantic driven behavior towards the destination.

Table 106: Nationality and love constructs

	USA	UK	French	Italians	Germans	Spanish	Australians	Greeks	Dutch
Self-identity	✓			✓			✓		
Life-meaning rewards			✓				✓		
Nostalgia & frequent thoughts		✓						✓	
Self-confirmation	✓							✓	
Well-being			✓	✓			✓		
Self-transformation	✓			✓					
Anthropomorphism					✓				✓
Emotional solidarity					✓	✓			✓
Emotional attachment	✓	✓	✓			✓			
Intuitive fit		✓						✓	
Positive psychological states		✓						✓	✓
Passion			✓	✓					
Long-term relationship					✓	✓	✓		

Details for each nationality segment with respect to love constructs are shown in table 106. Based on nationality, tourists who come from the USA tend to score higher on self-transformation, self-identity, self-confirmation and emotional attachment. French



tend to score higher on well-being, emotional attachment, passionate/romantic driven behavior towards the destination and life-meaning rewards. British tend to score higher on nostalgia, positive psychological states, intuitive fit and emotional attachment. Germans tend to score higher on long-term relationship with destination, anthropomorphism and emotional solidarity with locals. Spanish tend to score higher on emotional solidarity with locals, emotional attachment and long-term relationship with destination.

Table 107: Gender and love constructs

	Male	Female
Self-identity	✓	
Life-meaning rewards		✓
Nostalgia & frequent thoughts	✓	
Self-confirmation		✓
Well-being		✓
Self-transformation		✓
Anthropomorphism	✓	
Emotional solidarity	✓	
Emotional attachment	✓	
Intuitive fit		✓
Positive psychological states	✓	
Passion		✓
Long-term relationship		✓



Based on tourists' gender, women tend to score higher on long-term relationship with destination, passionate/romantic drive behavior, life meaning rewards, and self-love constructs. Men tend to score higher on anthropomorphism, nostalgia, self-identity, positive psychological states, emotional solidarity with locals and emotional attachment .

Table 108: Times of visit and love constructs

	1 time	2 times	3 times	4 times	5 or more times
Self-identity			✓	✓	
Life-meaning rewards					✓
Nostalgia & frequent thoughts				✓	✓
Self-confirmation				✓	
Well-being				✓	
Self-transformation		✓			
Anthropomorphism	✓				
Emotional solidarity			✓		✓
Emotional attachment					✓
Intuitive fit		✓			
Positive psychological states	✓				
Passion	✓	✓			
Long-term relationship					✓

Individuals who have visited only one time their most favorite destination tend to score higher on anthropomorphism, positive psychological states and passionate/romantic driven behavior towards the destination. People who have visited two times their most favorite destination tend to score higher on self-transformation,



passionate/romantic driven behavior and intuitive fit. Those who have visited three times their most favorite destination tend to score higher on self-identity and emotional solidarity with locals. Travelers who have visited four times their most favorite destination tend to score higher on self-confirmation, well-being, nostalgia and self-identity. Finally, people who have visited their most favorite destination five or more times tend to score higher on long-term relationship with destination, nostalgia, emotional attachment, emotional solidarity with locals and life meaning rewards.

It is clear that as times of visits increase, individuals search for more meaningful, transformational or/and emotional experiences. Tourism experts should provide repeat visitors with services and experiences that better fulfil the higher self (e.g., self-love, life meaning rewards) and social needs (e.g., emotional solidarity with locals) of tourists. Specifically, tourism practitioners may create personal higher needs connections for repeat visitors with the destination, accordingly. This is more universal than creating just positive psychological states, such as happiness and safety, since it encompasses a sense of actualization, social bonding and fulfilment as well as an intuitive feeling of soundness about the loved destination. This could be achieved by providing intrinsic rewards, organizing social/cultural events through which the interaction with locals can be ameliorated as well as enhancing the loved destination with a sense of inspiration and self-discovery from its unique characteristics, in order the destination buyer to satisfy his/her higher inner and social needs stemming from the destination.

Furthermore, people who spend usually on average 15 or more nights at their most favorite destination score higher on life meaning rewards, well-being, emotional attachment, nostalgia, self-confirmation and self-transformation. Tourists who spend usually 5-7 nights at their most favorite destination score higher on anthropomorphism, positive psychological states, intuitive fit, self-identity and passionate/romantic driven behavior. People who spend usually 3-4 nights at their most favorite destination scored higher on positive psychological states, intuitive fit and long-term relationship with destination. People who spend usually one night at their most favorite destination score higher on emotional attachment and anthropomorphism. Finally, people who usually do not stay overnight at their most favorite destination score higher on self-identity and life meaning rewards.



Table 109: length of stay and love constructs

	Not overstay	1 night	2 nights	3-4 nights	5-7 nights	8-10 nights	11-14 nights	15 or more nights
Self-identity	✓		✓		✓	✓		
Life-meaning rewards	✓							✓
Nostalgia & frequent thoughts						✓		✓
Self-confirmation			✓			✓		✓
Well-being						✓		✓
Self-transformation								✓
Anthropomorphism		✓	✓		✓			
Emotional solidarity			✓				✓	
Emotional attachment		✓						✓
Intuitive fit				✓	✓			
Positive psychological states				✓	✓			
Passion					✓		✓	
Long-term relationship				✓		✓		

In addition, people who usually travel alone tend to score higher on anthropomorphism, nostalgia, positive psychological state, long-term relationship and life meaning rewards. On the other hand, people who travel usually as a part of an organized group tend to score higher on self-identity, anthropomorphism, intuitive fit and positive psychological states. Individuals who travel usually as a couple tend to score higher on emotional attachment, nostalgia, and well-being. Individuals who travel usually with their family score higher on positive psychological states, anthropomorphism, emotional solidarity with locals, intuitive fit and well-being. Finally, people who



travel usually with their friends tend to score higher on long-term relationship with destination, nostalgia, self-transformation, passion and self-confirmation.

Table 110: way of travel and love constructs

	Alone	couple	family	friends	Organized groups
Self-identity					✓
Life-meaning rewards	✓				
Nostalgia & frequent thoughts	✓	✓		✓	
Self-confirmation				✓	
Well-being		✓	✓		
Self-transformation				✓	
Anthropomorphism	✓		✓		✓
Emotional solidarity			✓		
Emotional attachment		✓			
Intuitive fit			✓		✓
Positive psychological states	✓		✓		✓
Passion				✓	
Long-term relationship	✓			✓	

Moreover, people who prefer self-administered vacations score higher on nostalgia, well being, emotional attachment, passionate/romantic driven behavior towards the destination, long term relationship with destination, life meaning rewards, self-transformation and emotional solidarity with locals. On the other hand, individuals who prefer all inclusive travel packages score higher on positive psychological states, anthropomorphism, intuitive fit, self-identity and self-confirmation.



Table 111: preferable packages and love constructs

	All inclusive	Self-administered
Self-identity	✓	
Life-meaning rewards		✓
Nostalgia & frequent thoughts		✓
Self-confirmation	✓	
Well-being		✓
Self-transformation		✓
Anthropomorphism	✓	
Emotional solidarity		✓
Emotional attachment		✓
Intuitive fit	✓	
Positive psychological states	✓	
Passion		✓
Long-term relationship		✓

The most influential factor for tourists to visit their most favorite/preferable destination across all destination love constructs found to be WOM, social media and the official websites of destination. However, some insightful results were emerged by this research. Details are shown in Table 112.





Table 112: most influential factor to visit destination and love construct

	Brochures	Official websites	Social media	Advertisements	Travel magazines	WOM	Kiosks	other
Self-identity	✓			✓				
Life-meaning rewards	✓			✓				
Nostalgia & frequent thoughts	✓						✓	
Self-confirmation	✓							✓
Well-being		✓	✓	✓				
Self-transformation		✓	✓	✓				
Anthropomorphism	✓	✓			✓		✓	
Emotional solidarity			✓		✓			✓
Emotional attachment			✓					✓
Intuitive fit						✓		✓
Passion		✓		✓	✓			
Long-term relationship		✓				✓		
Positive psychological states						✓	✓	✓

Table 112 shows that individuals who were influenced mainly by WOM, scored higher on long-term relationship with destination, positive psychological states and intuitive fit. Individuals who were mostly influenced by social media, scored higher on emotional attachment, well-being, self-transformation and emotional solidarity with locals. People who were mostly influenced by official websites of the destination as well as other web sites, scored higher on anthropomorphism, long term relationship with destination, well-being, passionate/romantic driven behavior towards the destination and self-transformation. Individuals who were mostly influenced by articles in tourism and travel magazines scored higher on emotional solidarity with locals, anthropomorphism and passionate/romantic driven behavior towards the



destination. People who were mostly influenced by advertisements on tv, radio, cinema, magazines, newspapers scored higher on self-transformation, well-being, passionate/romantic driven behavior, self-identity and life-meaning & intrinsic rewards. Individuals who were influenced mainly by brochures and leaflets of travel agents scored higher on self-confirmation, self-identity, life meaning rewards, nostalgia and anthropomorphism. Tourists who were mainly influenced by information kiosks of the destination's National Tourism Organization scored higher on anthropomorphism, positive psychological states and nostalgia. Finally, people who were mostly influenced by books, conferences, job, studies and cruise programs scored higher on emotional solidarity with locals, intuitive fit, self-confirmation, emotional attachment and positive psychological states .

As a result, destination marketers as well as travel intermediaries, such as travel agents and tour operators could promote the destination emotional experience accordingly based on the results of this study. For instance:

- articles in tourism and travel magazines might highlight the aspect of emotional solidarity with locals, anthropomorphism and passion.
- informative and promotional destination Kiosks could highlight anthropomorphism, positive psychological states and nostalgia.
- destination's social media could make use of emotional attachment aspects, as well as of well-being, self-transformation and emotional solidarity with locals.

Furthermore, most of the tourists prefer relaxation, visiting attractions and get in touch with local culture and customs when being at their most favorite destination. However, some remarkable results emerged such as that the majority of individuals who prefer visiting attractions at their most favorite/loved destination tend to score higher on passionate/romantic driven behavior towards the destination, self-transformation, well-being and self-confirmation. People who mainly prefer relaxing at their most favorite destination score higher on emotional attachment, positive psychological states, long term relationship with destination, anthropomorphism and nostalgia. Moreover, individuals who mainly prefer to get in touch with the locals and their culture at their most favorite destination score higher on emotional solidarity with locals, life meaning rewards, emotional attachment, self-identity, nostalgia and



anthropomorphism. People who mainly prefer touring at the destination score higher on self-identity, intuitive fit and anthropomorphism. Individuals who stated that they prefer exploring new areas at their most favorite destination score higher on positive psychological states, well-being, self-transformation and intuitive fit. People who are sport/adventure seekers score higher on emotional solidarity with locals and self-confirmation. Finally, people who prefer entertainment at their most favorite destination score higher on self-identity.

Table 113: Most important activity at destination and love constructs

	Get in touch with Locals & customs	Touring	entertainment	attractions	Adventure seeking	Relaxation	Explore new places
Self-identity	✓	✓	✓				
Life-meaning rewards	✓						
Nostalgia & frequent thoughts	✓					✓	
Self-confirmation				✓	✓		
Well-being				✓			✓
Self-transformation				✓			✓
Anthropomorphism	✓	✓				✓	
Emotional solidarity	✓				✓		
Emotional attachment	✓					✓	
Intuitive fit		✓					✓
Passion				✓			
Long-term relationship						✓	
Positive psychological states						✓	✓



Therefore, destination marketers as well as travel intermediaries, could promote the destination emotional experience accordingly based on the results of this study. For instance:

- for adventure/sport seekers, destination marketing strategies could include and highlight the aspects of emotional solidarity with locals and self-confirmation.

The striking majority of tourists prefer staying in hotels and rental rooms at their most favorite/preferable destination.

Table 114: Type of accommodation and love constructs

	Hotels	Rental rooms	Camping	AirBnB	Own house	Friends/ relatives
Self-identity					✓	✓
Life-meaning rewards					✓	
Nostalgia & frequent thoughts					✓	
Self-confirmation	✓					
Well-being					✓	
Self-transformation	✓					
Anthropomorphism		✓	✓			
Emotional solidarity	✓					
Emotional attachment				✓	✓	
Intuitive fit				✓		
Passion		✓		✓		
Long-term relationship			✓		✓	
Positive psychological states		✓				✓



Table 114 shows that those tourists who mostly prefer staying in hotels at their most favorite/preferable destination scored higher on self-confirmation, emotional solidarity with locals and self-transformation. People who prefer rental rooms scored higher on positive psychological states, passionate/romantic driven behavior towards the destination and anthropomorphism. Individuals who prefer camping scored higher on anthropomorphism and long term relationship with destination. People who prefer AirBnB scored higher on intuitive fit, positive psychological states, passionate behavior towards the destination and emotional attachment. People who stay in their own house at their most favorite destination scored higher on nostalgia, self-identity, emotional attachment, life meaning rewards, long-term relationship with destination and well-being. Finally, people who usually stay at their friends/relatives scored higher on long term relationship with destination, self-identity and positive psychological states.

These results could be insightful for both destination marketers and accommodation experts since they could design and promote the (destination) emotional experience accordingly based on the results of this study. For instance

- hotel owners could stress in their marketing strategies the aspects of self-confirmation, emotional solidarity with locals and self-transformation
- camping owners could highlight in their marketing strategies the aspect of anthropomorphism and long term relationship with destination.

4. What's more, the building of strong loved destination that symbolize or connect to what we refer to emotional deeper meanings and important values, could help in the creation of a destination love experience among different touchpoints within the customer journey in order to achieve positive outcomes. From this study, it is evident that respondents connect destination love with intrinsic rather than extrinsic travel benefits. It could be suggested that if "destination love" is to be created by destinations, then destination marketers should adjust their destination value proposition accordingly, in *all stages* of travel for the enhancement of the tourists' self-growth, life meaning and intrinsic rewards. So, it is essential for tourism marketing managers to engage in "destination love stories" in order to improve their destination product and service design as well as offerings.



5. The findings of the similar emotional nature between destination and interpersonal love indicate that destination marketing managers need to focus on a variety of emotionally meaningful marketing strategies and campaign activities, for instance travel festivals and destination exhibitions that could function as emotional stimuli to tourists' minds and hearts and ultimately set the stage for tourists to create their own emotional experiences at all travel stages. In doing so, tourists could build strong, loving -and thus long lasting- relationships with the destination. Moreover, apart from the marketing principles, the incorporation of positive psychology principles into the design of travel experiences could help destination marketers to achieve complete tourists' wellbeing/flourishing and fulfilling outcomes. Driver (2008) argues that wellbeing development- focused management is needed when designing travel experiences.

6. An additional key managerial implication is that brand managers could successfully entrench service and tourism-oriented values, characteristics and behaviors in order to reach each target market with a *'comprehensive range of emotional and experiential offerings'* and to propose an *'integrated emotional solution'*. Such an approach also lies with the concept of co-creative marketing which includes both the company and the customers that interact in all aspects of the design, production and service delivery (e.g. Zouni & Kouremenos, 2008; Grönroos, 2017). In a similar vein, by transmitting -if possible and with proper adjustment- the benefits (e.g., personal well-being and development, direct experience, experiential learning, human interactions) stemming from destination love to brands, marketers could build meaningful emotional relationships, not only with consumers or employees, but also with various stakeholders in order to achieve emotional ties and engagement with the brand, which should be the core of any strategy (in line with Balmer & Greyser, 2006 as well as Kaufmann, Loureiro & Manarioti, 2016). Based on the above mentioned, this study highlights the need of development a new marketing oriented concept, that of *"co-cremotion"* (cremotion=create emotion) marketing. This co-cremotion process could encompass equally (destination) brand managers and key stakeholders, constituting a new brand emotional relationship angle that will acknowledge and strengthen the benefits of stakeholders' participation as well as capitalize on constructive marketing dialogue that could enhance brand's emotional strength and competitive advantage in



the market. Through co-cremotion, building and offering loveable (destination) brands could function as a consumer's/tourist's "*powerful repositories of meaning*" (Fournier, 1998: 365)

7. This study found that entrenched concepts in marketing, such as satisfaction and WOM play an important role for destination love. The results converge with previous research in demonstrating the connection of love with satisfaction and other post-consumption behaviors, such as WOM (e.g., Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006; Batra et al., 2012, Aro et al., 2018; Amaro et al., 2020). More specifically, satisfaction proved to be an important predictor of destination love and destination love found to be an important predictor of WOM. Hence, these findings are essential for tourist destination marketers in order to focus on managing the holistic destination experience. If the experience falls short of (emotional) expectations, tourists are unlikely to spread the good word or recommend the destination to their relatives/friends and acquaintances. Results of this study stress the importance of interrelationships among satisfaction, love, and WOM and give insights to destination managers in order to better plan and predict future tourism flows.

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### 7.1.3. PERSONAL & SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

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1. Tourism is an act of learning about other places through direct experience (Falk et al., 2012). Learning contributes to self-development, through tourists' interaction with hosts or the site (Falk et al., 2012). Broomhall, Pitman, Majocha and McEwan (2010) argued that traveling offers the opportunity for lifelong learning. Similarly, Kuh (1995) stressed that traveling can be perceived as a powerful contributor to generic skill development. Self-love, which constitutes an individual's higher self-need of well-being, confirmation or/and transformation, was found to be a central aspect of destination love (Lykoudi et al., 2020a). Self-love is about fructifying one's deepest experience of actualization and fulfillment, one's richest achievement of well-being or/and one's worthiest capacities. It is an inner process of unfolding the best in oneself and culminating one's potentialities, values and aspirations. Furthermore, destination love encompasses mainly intrinsic rewards that make individuals' life meaningful and worth living. DMOs could foster tourists' higher self-needs and



encourage life meaning rewards by offering learning experiences at the destination (e.g., cultural routes where the cultural product of the destination is well-designed and presented to visitors, or informative panels that could stimulate and increase visitors' knowledge skills and involvement), as well as challenging activities that would help visitors stimulate their mind and senses and contribute to their personal growth. Individuals who are participating in new, exciting, and interesting activities at a destination can achieve self-expansion, through learning new things (e.g., wildlife/cultural/gastronomic seminars, local customs and locals' way of life), acquiring knowledge and obtaining new perspectives, and thus enhance their ability to accomplish new things (Mattingly & Lewandowski, 2013) and get various intrapersonal benefits (Kruger, Sirgy, Lee & Yu, 2015). In addition, destination managers could design destination-related services based on satisfying these tourists' higher self-needs and encourage tourists to select these services by highlighting the intrinsic rewards via, for instance, an interactive destination web site/application that could help tourists make implementation decisions to ensure their personal goal attainment (Sirgy, 2010).

2. In tourism literature, the study of emotional relationships between locals and tourists is rather limited concerning the theoretical development and testing. Locals constitute a focal part of the place and, by extension, visitors' experiences (Freire, 2009) and play a central role in the place branding process (Zenker, Braun & Petersen, 2017). Traditionally, relationships between locals and tourists are limited to trivial encounters or functional exchanges, since locals and tourists, within the context of travel destinations, are usually perceived as being separate from each other, having little in common (Woosnam, Norman & Ying, 2009). However, locals and tourists are inextricably connected, since when being on holidays visitors interact with locals in everyday life activities (Zhang, Inbakaran & Jackson, 2006).

The findings of this research effort showed that tourists' emotional solidarity with locals is a dimension of destination love. A loved destination is a means of sharing values, experiences and knowledge, imbued with personal and cultural characteristics, by which personal relationships between locals and tourists are reinforced, engraved in the mind and heart of individuals. Interaction between locals and tourists as well as sharing activities can foster great mutual understanding and strengthen ties between





locals and tourists (Woosnam & Norman, 2010). This interpersonal interaction and sharing could be achieved through shopping at local stores, eating at local restaurants, visiting attractions such as museums and art galleries, and participating in local festivals and special events, among others.

Social bonding (e.g., common beliefs/values and affinity as a result of locals'-tourists' interactions) as well as tourists' social contribution to destination (e.g., donations for the destination's natural/cultural preservation, tourists' participation in local preservation activities, providing the local community with expertise for the destination's improvement) were described by tourists as love and found to be central aspects of destination love. All the above mentioned give tourists the feeling of being vital and valuable members of the destination community. Hence the integration of the social aspects of destination love (tourists' social integration, contribution and bonding) into destination's planning strategy could both raise/strengthen the love level of tourists towards the destination and offer destination marketers an integrative force that enriches the preservation and development of the local community, as well. This societal marketing approach would focus more on the tourists-locals or tourists-tourists relationship instead of tourist-destination brand relationship, since it aims at creating and supporting the relation between visitors and the local community.

Gathering together in social, proximate communities could be more affective and influential on individual's behavior than traditional marketing efforts (Cova & Cova, 2002). DMOs could create travel programs that ameliorate tourist's socializing experience and involve active participation in social and cultural local activities rather than in just sightseeing. To satisfy the emotional need of tourists for social bonding, marketing efforts can be focused on designing and launching products and services destined to facilitate the co-presence and the communal gathering of individuals at destination.

Furthermore, destination organizations might capitalize on some forms of tourism that are associated with belonging to a local community (e.g., village tourism, home-stays, tribal or indigenous tourism, agro-tourism) in order to enhance social interaction between tourists and locals as well as social contribution (e.g., through voluntary acts) and social bonding. Moreover, marketers could design travel programs to enhance the well-being of the tourists and meet their intrinsic goals. Destination marketers could design and offer products, services or activities that promote and strengthen social



relationships, tourists' competences, and voluntary participation. The meanings ascribed to these products and services should be focused on collective experiences. DMOs could support products/services that hold people together as a group of devotees or enthusiasts. This encompasses anything that strengthens social links between visitors and locals, and fosters a sense of community belonging. Thus, destination marketers should take into account the "linking" value of their products/services (Cova, 1997b). The "linking" value *"refers to the product's or service's contribution to establishing and/or reinforcing bonds between individuals"* (Cova & Cova, 2002: 10), and it could be embedded in the design of the destination's products/services/experiences.

Destination marketers could also support the development of an online and offline destination community for visitors to propose new ideas and share their travel experiences related to social and inner goals (Kruger et al., 2015). Destination communities could be held together essentially through shared experiences, communication, beliefs, and contribution and they could work as a potent tool of keeping the destination in their mind and hearts.

In addition, DMOs should genuinely act for the sake of the community (e.g., social responsibility) and safeguard its natural/cultural treasures that are closely linked to the identity of the destination (Christou, 2018).

The contribution of destination love in social/personal enhancement, is also beneficiary, financially, for hospitality and tourism organizations, since DMOs by implementing principles associated with personal and social well-being could benefit in the long-term by *"bestowing a heightened level of corporate social responsibility"* (Sirgy, 2019: 11), which subsequently is possible to *"strengthen the organization's positive reputation among its various stakeholder groups, which in turn would ensure its future prosperity and sustainability"* (Sirgy, 2019: 11). This future prosperity and sustainability of the destination (brand) could depend on the ability of destination managers to discard mechanical marketing thinking as well as on their willingness to adopt a societal approach in their destination marketing strategy, which would place the tourists' need of intrinsic rewards and self-growth as well as the social link between tourists and local community at the heart of the offering strategy.



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## 7.2. LIMITATIONS

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1. A certain level of geographical selection and participation bias is unavoidable, since the researcher followed the purposive sampling procedure in the first two studies and quota sampling procedure in the third study and recruited tourists from three specific famous Greek destinations, Athens, Ancient Olympia and Santorini island, like studies of similar nature (e.g., Ahuvia, Batra & Bagozzi, 2008; Pandowo, 2016; Swanson, 2017).

2. Moreover, the first two studies were in English. Studies 1 and 2 used the English language across all participants. The idea of one flexible language that accommodates all participants is rather appealing but of course it has drawbacks. Even though the use of the English language in today's world is widespread and it is spoken by more non-native than native speakers (Kachru, 1985; Jenkins, 2013; Neville, 2018), the danger lies in that it might overlook significant language differences between non-native participants (Earle, 1969; Botha, 1970; O'Regan, 2014). However, more recent studies concerning the within participant questionnaire (same questionnaire in two different languages to every respondent) have shown no differences between language versions (e.g., Katerberg et al., 1977; Tyson et al., 1988; and Sanchez et al., 2000). The English language as the de facto first language of globalization exists as a lingua franca in the world, and it is used as 'contact language' for communication across linguistic as well as cultural boundaries. Both approaches (English or native language) bear advantages and disadvantages. This study favored the use of the English language in the first two studies in order to minimize the language discrepancies and barriers of the novel concept of destination love due to the multicultural nature of the study. However, it is acknowledged that some important aspects and information on destination love may have been lost due to the use of the English language across all participants.

3. Further, this research effort aspired to build and measure a rather complex psychological construct (destination love) by using for some of its subconstructs only a few items (e.g., 4 items), which could be perceived problematic as they may capture



only a limited part of the constructs (e.g., anthropomorphism, passion, loyalty). However, the final model was more parsimonious with that amount of items for its subconstructs. After all, too lengthy measures can not be pragmatically suitable (Junaid et al., 2019), since *“the practice of incorporating lengthy instruments in data collection tools is also problematic, which is true because consumers are less willing to respond to lengthy questionnaires and practicing managers often react negatively to such practices”* (Vlachos & Vrechopoulos, 2012: 226). The final items that included in the model (54 items) were proved to efficiently manifest, measure and explain the study’s concepts (e.g., 99,3% of self-love variance is explained by the items used in the study; 99,8% of self-destination integration variance is explained by the items used in this study; 99,5% of positive emotional connection variance is explained by the items used in this study) and destination love (98,5% of its variance is explained by the items used in this study), and based on the literature review as well.

4. Although the results of this study suggest that love predicts Word of Mouth and is predicted by satisfaction, it does not suggest that satisfaction is the only or best driver of destination love or that destination love is the only or best driver of WOM or that WOM requires love. Rather, it is suggested that destination love scale is valid because it is predicted by satisfaction and predicts WOM in a manner consistent with brand love theory. More specifically, it should be stressed that satisfaction alone should not be perceived as a sufficient predictor of destination love, as it is not unlikely for satisfied consumers to switch or develop emotional relationships with competitor’s (destination) brands for numerous reasons ( e.g., Reichheld, 1996 ), which means that satisfied consumers do not necessarily develop (brand) love (Roy, Eshghi & Sarkar, 2013). However, based on the brand love theory, satisfaction is a prerequisite of love and love is an antecedent to WOM (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006 ). Thus, love is argued to mediate the relationship between satisfaction and WOM (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006 ).

5. Additionally, someone may argue that in Studies 1 and 2, the researcher actually used explicitly the word “love” and this might introduce a bias, such that subjects formulate all their emotional responses with reference to a feeling of love. However, in numerous related exploratory studies that use qualitative methods, such as



interviews and open-ended questions in marketing, the researchers actually use explicitly the word “love” (e.g., Fournier, 1998; Ahuvia, 1993, 2005b; Batra et al., 2012; Kwon & Mattila, 2015; Langner et al., 2016; Swanson, 2017; Aro et al., 2018). As it was described in the methodology section, asking explicitly about love is the proper approach, since the meaning of “love” should be set clear and distinctively from other concepts like mere liking (Langner et al., 2016). This explicit approach can add confidence to researcher that participants indeed describe love and not other concepts, and it can also be an effective means to prevent people from using the word “love” too loosely (Langner et al., 2016), as well as speculate actively and vigorously on the specific notion.

6. Finally, this study’s quality is undoubtedly subject to the researcher’s skills and experience in collecting, analyzing and interpreting qualitative data. The researcher tried to be very open and responsive to the emerged data, by avoiding any temptation that could influence her research objective stance, for instance via personal bias.

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### 7.3. FUTURE RESEARCH

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1. Destination love should be viewed as continually evolving and not as static, since it incorporates each and every love dimension and destination-related emotional experiences that may change the future course of the tourist-destination relationship. The main purpose of this study was to build the theory and measurement scales of destination love. That’s why only a very few variables as antecedents (satisfaction) and consequences (WOM) of destination love were investigated. Future research should assess the effect of this model on some additional destination love antecedents, mediators, moderators and outcomes, such as willingness to pay a price premium, resistance to negative information, destination image, destination characteristics, destination awareness, destinations’ product/service value etc, capable of extending the knowledge of this construct. Future research could also investigate these variables in different categories of destination products and services.



2. Destination love scales based their reliance on participants, who each chose their most favorite/preferable destination for holidays and answered all the questions with respect to their most favorite/preferable destination. Hence the scale has been developed by using a multicultural, diverse sample population and multiple destinations. It would be interesting to see how the scale behaves if one of the two is limited, for instance, either a homogeneous sample expressing feelings towards various destinations or a multicultural sample expressing feelings towards a specific destination or specific tourism destination context (e.g., heritage, religious). This could give more insights on which destination love dimensions are more possible to be developed in these contexts.

3. Even though this study explored destination love as a universal, multi-dimensional marketing concept to give insights into the intense emotional relationship between tourists and destinations, further research is required to investigate destination love concept in specific tourism contexts, such as heritage tourism, agricultural tourism, eco-tourism, film tourism, mountain tourism, religious tourism and so on. For example, which destination love dimensions are more possible to be developed in these specific tourism contexts? Briefly, it is essential that future research investigates the model in other tourism, leisure and recreational contexts and settings in order to confirm the external validity of the current study's findings.

4. Moreover, future research on love for tourism destinations could trace the relationship dynamics in the trajectories of destination love. In particular, it would be very interesting to investigate destination love with respect to trajectory types of brand love found by Langner et al. (2016). For example, future research could shed light on whether destination love is developing slowly or it is love at first sight (it is developed in a very short time after the initial contact with destination). The results could be useful to destination managers in order to successfully involve their destinations in personal destination love stimulating experiences (e.g., childhood memories, transitional life phases etc).

5. Additionally, tourists who develop destination love could also be divided into feelers and thinkers based on Jung's (1971) personality type distinction. This



distinction could be an insightful moderator of the impact of destination experiences on the tourists' destination love development. For instance, thinkers may tend to develop self-love dimension and destination love slowly, whereas feelers might be more likely to develop destination love at first sight and thus passionate/romantic driven behaviors towards the destination.

6. Furthermore, behavioral patterns of tourists who develop love towards their most favorite tourism destination could be further divided into two groups that of single visitors (who mainly visit only one destination when they go on vacations) and multiple visitors (who visit more than one destinations when they go on vacations). Future research should take into account the difference between single and multiple visitors in the proposed destination love model, given that specific destination characteristics and offers may convert multiple users into single users.

7. In addition, destination love concept could also be investigated with respect to destination life cycle. Tourists' emotions are dynamic in nature and thus may transform over different stages of destination life cycle (Stylidis et al., 2017). For example, does destination life cycle influence destination love development? If yes, then in which destination life cycle stage (introduction, growth, maturity, decline) is more possible for destination love to be developed? Which destination love sub-construct is more possible to be developed in destination's introduction, growth, maturity and decline stage?

8. Future research could also investigate the proposed destination love model using a longitudinal approach to find out the effect of *time* on the model. The use of longitudinal designs could be a logical extension of the human-place emotion research in tourism, since longitudinal designs have the potential to advance knowledge on how human-place relationships develop and evolve over time.

9. More studies are required to further explore the items of destination love and to more confidently infer the construct's validity, since love is characterized as a difficult and disputable concept (e.g., Christou, 2018). Although this study provides encouragingly satisfactory evidence of the measurement's applicability, the items of





the destination love concept could be complemented by further cross-cultural research, refining the destination love concept itself, in different contexts, as well as facilitating our understanding of this notion.

10. Furthermore, the number of final items (54) used in the scale is rather large. For academics and professionals using this scale as part of an overall research design, some difficulties may appear in actual implementation. A shortened version of the scale would be beneficial to researchers.

11. Finally, a future research agenda could consider apart from tourists' perceptions, who give an one-sided aspect of destination love, perceptions of locals/employees as well as destination managers and professionals, by applying social exchange theory to substantiate locals/employees/professionals' love feelings toward the destination (brand) for which they work or live and therefore broaden our comprehension of destination love from professionals/employees/locals' perspectives.

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## 7.4. CONCLUSION

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A destination cannot be perceived as merely an object, but instead as part of a larger whole that is being experienced and felt via all the human senses, such as hearing, sight, touch, taste and smell (Sell, Taylor & Zube, 1984; Shamai, 1991).

Destination love, without doubt, is a novel, very complex and vague concept. This study revealed the meaning of the term as described and used by individual subjects, but also by researchers among various disciplines such as psychology, marketing, sociology and tourism and aspired to define the concept precisely by providing an operational definition. Obviously, destination love can be considered as one of the most abstract notions in the marketing and tourism literatures, since understanding what is a true love for a destination is a rather complex task. Destination love should not be seen as a formal concept that awaits precise definition, since love is easier to be





felt and seen in human behaviour rather than in precise and restrictional definition terms.

This study tried to probe into the concept of destination love itself, by perceiving place/destination as a multifaceted phenomenon of experience. It should be stressed that destination itself is not a sufficient condition to create love. In order to create love towards a destination, there is a need for identification and personal involvement with the place as well as a deep and meaningful experience with a place. The human assets (residents and employees) of the place also work as catalysts in creating/strengthening the love towards the place and thus develop strong bonds between people and place. This study proved that tourists do develop love (the most intense and complex emotion) with destinations. Destination love is a complex bundle of feelings, (emotional) experiences, meanings, and qualities that an individual associates (unconsciously and/or consciously) with a specific place. Destination love can be described as a long-term relationship, self-higher emotion, emotional connection and identification with destination (physical, cultural, product, services) characteristics, as well as passion towards the destination, emotional bond with locals and the anthropomorphism of destination. The core dimensions of destination love include different self-related cognitions (e.g., self-transformation, self-confirmation, well being, self-identity); positive psychological states (such as harmony, happiness), emotional attachment, passion, emotional solidarity with locals, anthropomorphism, a sense of connectedness and intuitive fit, as well as attitudes and behaviors (such as frequent thoughts and loyalty) that studies 1, 2, and 3 identified as being forms of destination love. Therefore, destination love model is a highly inclusive model that encompasses not only emotional facets (e.g., emotional attachment, passion; nostalgia, positive emotions; emotional solidarity with locals), but also behavioral ties (e.g., long-term relationship with destination) and cognitive beliefs (e.g., self-identity, life meaning rewards) or a mix of them (e.g., self-love; anthropomorphism; intuitive fit).

Destination love is different from interpersonal love or brand love, but it shares similar features with both kinds of love. It encompasses emotions and cognitions toward a constellation of destination images, offerings, services, products, and experiences. Destination love stands out as a more intense, complex and inclusive concept than place attachment, like and passion. The findings provided empirical



evidence for the multi-dimensional structure of destination love and established a set of destination love measurement items for future studies in several tourism and leisure contexts. This research effort combined existing literatures on interpersonal and brand love in order to explain destination love. The main contribution of this dissertation is the establishment of the multi-dimensional and multi-item conceptual and measurement framework of destination love.

By establishing destination love as a seven-dimensional universal construct, this study provides new insights to academics and managers. The overall destination love model indicated a good fit to the data, it is consistent with academic theories across different fields (e.g., marketing, psychology, tourism, sociology) and it required no further re-specification. From a methodological perspective, the confirmatory factor analysis supported the validity of the destination love scales, which could be of utmost importance to researchers, who aspire to explore and capture destination love in more specific contexts (e.g., heritage destinations).

Destination love is both associated with business-related and non-business related features or/and outcomes. The findings showed that, apart from business-related benefits (i.e., loyalty) and favourable outcomes (i.e., WOM), destination love also produces optimal emotional and cognitive states for individuals, such as self-transformation, well being and life meaning rewards.

An essential learning that stems from this research effort is that destination managers should consider tourists' love towards destinations by acknowledging and investing in the destination's distinctive characteristics, attributes, infrastructure, affective components, products, services and activities. The findings indicate that destination experts should promote the emotional component of the destination and subsequently invest in strategies that are more likely to make visitors develop strong emotional bonds with the destination. Strategies to promote emotional components could range from pre-visit targeting and communication strategies, on-site marketing as well as post-visit targeting and communication strategies aimed at encouraging (repeat) visitation to sophisticated, customized (if possible) message development and delivery aimed at building a sense of identification and belonging, long-term commitment, emotional solidarity with locals, anthropomorphisation of destination, positive emotional connection, as well as enhanced personal values and meanings.



Moreover, the results of this study can be generalized, since the conceptualized model was stemmed from a great variety of multicultural samples (from 40 different countries) among the three studies as well as the model was developed in relation to multiple tourism destinations around the world (universal approach). Additionally, the results of this study stem from the universal research approach, concerning multiple destinations across the world, so that it adds to the robustness of the findings (Yin, 2009; Swanson, Medway & Warnaby, 2015). Moreover, the universality of the destination love measurement scales reflects their generalization in tourism destinations, by setting a universal framework with the possibility of items addition or adjustment with respect to destination-specific characteristics. In this way, it is secured, apart from validity, that the design and implementation of the proposed destination love measurement scales will be relevant to each destination's specific features.

In addition, this research effort gave insights into whether academics as well as practitioners should focus on the investigation and examination of individual destination love subdimensions or only on the overall destination love concept or score. Surely, there are both advantages and disadvantages of looking at either overall destination concept or each destination love sub-dimension. For both academics and managers, looking at overall destination love can assist to spot opportunities and threats that would have remained hidden if a single dimensional measure of destination love has been used: *“analysis of multiple dimensions provides more diagnostics”* (Bagozzi, Batra & Ahuvia, 2017: 13). However, for academics, *“looking at the subdimensions of multi-dimensional constructs is a valuable, and sometimes essential, approach to theory development and testing”* (Bagozzi, Batra & Ahuvia, 2017:13). After all, it is difficult to offer good theoretical explanations of how destination love interacts with other constructs without being able to measure each of destination love's subdimensions (Bagozzi, Batra & Ahuvia, 2017).

In a nutshell, this study extended the knowledge and understanding of love in academia and suggested to tourism policy makers and marketers several ways to create, enhance and/or maintain the tourists' destination love over time. Furthermore, since destinations can be perceived as business networks (Lemmetyinen & Go, 2009), this research effort provided new insights into how love can be created and enhanced in business networks. This dissertation developed and confirmed the validity and



usefulness of the destination love construct organized as a mental prototype and showed that destination love subdimensions explain 98,5% of destination love. The theory as well as the measurement scales developed, by this study, could aid future research into tourism destination issues, in general, and facilitate in tests of research hypotheses where destination love is focal, in particular.

This dissertation has only commenced to grasp the basics of this fascinating subject and it provides the first exploration of destination love in tourism and marketing literatures. But inasmuch as love needs to be developed and communicated towards tourists, the core utilitarian assets that also make up a destination's offerings must not be ignored. Utilitarian and core features of destination's products/services (e.g., price, quality) are very crucial to set the basis for the tourists' development of emotional ties with destination. If a destination provides poor quality services and products, then it is highly unlikely that a visitor could develop emotional bonds with it. Destination marketers should understand that love has, also, a strong rational grounding and is not only emotionally driven and thus irrational grounding (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006; Batra et al., 2012 ; Alba & Lutz, 2013; Schmid & Huber, 2019; Bigne, Andreu, Perez & Ruiz, 2020). An emotional bonding can be strengthened by the functional characteristics of the brand (Pinto Borges, Cardoso & Rodrigues, 2016) and brand love is stemmed from rational benefits like product quality (Langner, Schmidt & Fischer, 2015). Moreover, according to Sarkar (2014) "*brand love is a powerful consumption emotion which is largely cognitive based*" (as cited in Gumparathi & Patra, 2020: 9). In the same vein, destination love could also partially have its roots on the tourists' cognitive evaluation of destination brand features/products/services and cost-benefit analysis. Hence, the design and tourist-oriented development of the core features of destination offerings (both tangible and intangible) are of utmost importance as well in order to vanish all the possible tourists' cognitive obstacles, that may appear due to core destination attributes/product/services failures, and therefore allow tourists' mind to proceed to the next level that of destination love and thus activate their hearts too.



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## APPENDIX

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### SELECTED INTERVIEWS AND OPEN ENDED PARTICIPANTS' DESCRIPTIONS ABOUT LOVE FOR THEIR MOST FAVORITE AND IDEAL DESTINATIONS

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In this section some of the respondents' definitions and descriptions of destination love are presented. It has to be stressed that all participants when defined or described love for a destination referred to more than one dimensions or elements of love.

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#### STUDY 2 (OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS)

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*Female, French, 34, master graduate, engineer*

Spain is her most favorite as well as ideal destination. Her definition about love for Spain is the following:

*“When I am in Spain I am peaceful. As a person I am introverted and this place makes me speculate a lot about life and who I am. This destination helps me to understand deeply myself, who I am, what are the important values of life and which is the way of lifestyle I truly want. Eventually I will live forever there in few years”. She continued “...this destination has defined my personality. I found myself there and I love myself more. I also miss this destination a lot when I am not there. I always think about it and I anticipate to go back”.*

*Female, USA, 52, university graduate, law enforcement*

Kefalonia Island in Greece is her most favorite destination that she does love and Topsail Island in the USA is her ideal destination that she does love, as well. Her definitions about love for Topsail Island as well as for Kefalonia Island are the following:

*“My love for Topsail Island can be defined as a true sense of the absolute escape from troubling everyday routines, intertwined with deep enjoyment and appreciation*



*of spending time with my best friend. It is my ideal loved destination because it rejuvenates me altogether. I feel totally free and comfortable there, able to manage my daily activities any way I wish. I love waking up and walking straight to the beach with my cup of coffee, and watching the birds and the sea and the natural phenomena that happen right in front of my eyes. I do love Topsail Island because I feel it provides for me the absolutely ideal relaxation and solidarity, and, therefore, I feel it loves me back". She continues: "I love the freedom of thought I am able to achieve and maintain while visiting this place. I become entirely who I am, do not pretend, do not have to exercise the extremely directed "political savvy" I have to display while at work. I feel free to do the activities I choose to do. When I return back to my ordinary life, I am a better person mentally and physically".*

*"My love for Kefalonia can be defined as a true sense of cultural connection intertwined with deep affection for my mother, all the people there, and every aspect of the location itself. I love Kefalonia because my mother lives there, it is the place I was born, and which has developed me socially, first as a child and later as an adult. My native language and the authentic values, loyalty, family bonds, and friendships that connect me to Kefalonia continue to define me to this day; are deep and unbreakable; and only become stronger as time passes. Over time, my friendships have become nearly family bonds. I love Kefalonia means that I am Kefalonia! I feel an amazingly strong affection and connection with the people of Kefalonia. I have achieved the perfect understanding and connection with these individuals, their families, and their spirit. I feel welcome when I visit, and assimilate with the place and the people instantaneously. Every time I visit, I feel I have never left."*

*Male, Spanish, 64, university graduate, teacher*

He claimed that he loves Chalkidi, Greece, which is his most favorite and ideal place. He defined love for Chalkidiki:

*"I love the uniqueness of the landscape and water. They take my breath away. The beach and the forest are very beautiful. When I was there, I felt a unique calmness and I promised myself that I will visit this place again and again in the near future, because I want to explore more of it and gain more authentic experiences. This place makes me feel unique and relaxed. It stimulates all my senses and love feelings for*



*myself. Love for me is that I also respect the uniqueness of the place and I take care of it like it is my home. For example I collected all the trash from the forest and the beach, I put signs in order to inform the new visitors to respect the place and keep it clean as well. The place gives me unique experiences and happy moments and I respect it”.*

*Male, German, 65, master graduate, archaeologist*

His most favorite as well as most ideal destination is Greece. He defined love for Greece as :

*“I love the serenity and calmness Greece offers to my soul. I am peaceful and away from my routine. It feeds my soul with positive thoughts and it makes me happy. I also feel that there is a mutual love between me and the place itself. It gives me happiness, great experiences for my soul, tranquility and calmness. I have traveled a lot, but only this place gives what my soul needs. I come into contact with my inner self, I find myself there. I am thankful for what I get from this place and that’s why I do care about it by taking part in actions to preserve it, by contributing to the local community”.*

*Male, Hungarian, 30, master graduate, entrepreneur*

His most favorite destination is Lake Balaton in Hungary and his most ideal destination is Lisbon, Portugal.

He defined love for Lake Balaton:

*“I love Lake Balaton because when I am there I feel healthy and that I can love myself in a healthy way which allows me to love everyone else. I often travel to visit the nature there and through that I become more ‘grounded’. It helps me to be mindful and healthy. Lake Balaton as a destination excites me because I know I’m getting away from the artificial urban environment to step into a space where my senses are more open and I can experience higher forces than me. This balances me and makes me accept my thoughts and voices in my head. This in turn helps me to be healthy in mind and body and thus love and appreciate myself”.*

He defined love for Lisbon:

*“I love Lisbon because I have friends there, the atmosphere of Lisbon is amazing and unique, there is music everywhere and the ocean and mountains are close so I can*





*climb and swim. I feel an emotional connection with this place and my heart belongs there.... within couple of days I started picking up the local style both in behavior and in clothing as well”.*

*Female, Greek, 35, PhD, Secondary education teacher*

*“My love for Paris could be defined as the strong desire to visit it and to be there as well as the positive feelings I experience there, such as happiness and romance. The great interest and pleasure in discovering everything that location has to offer. I also love spending hours wandering in art museums, walking cobblestone streets and eating dainty pastries. I’ve always had the intense desire to go to Paris in France.*

*The specific reason to explain that desire is a collection of things that draw my specific attention to Paris. In addition “love” for me means the special energy of the city. The romance that is in the air, as a result of the interpersonal love. Paris works as a means of acceptance of myself. That can be described as an unconditional sense of freedom by knowing how I am spending my emotional, mental, and physical energy, and whether these activities bring back joy, connection, rest, and creativity to my life as well as by making time to do whatever I simply love, for example just to walk in the place, without worrying about wasting time. I feel also a bond between me and Paris. This emotional bond could be explained by the fact that the place is being “meaningful” to me, since it makes me feel happy, wonderful, blessed, creative, and it is a means of meeting people from diverse cultures”.*

*Female, USA, 49, PhD, Professor*

The destination she loves is Greece (favorite and ideal). She defined love for Greece as the following:

*“Love is a complex idea, whether we are talking about people or places. But I will try to explain. When I say I “love” Greece, what I mean is that I felt a sense of welcoming and belonging when I was there. As a professional philosopher, being at the birthplace of my field of study felt almost like a homecoming. Likewise, as someone of Mediterranean heritage, I could imagine Greece as someplace similar to where my ancestors would have lived. Additionally, the people I met in Athens and, especially Olympia, were so warm and kind open, that I felt a sense of kinship almost*





*immediately. The food was fabulous, the architecture and history was impressive, and the weather while I was there was gorgeous. I say I “love” it because I have not been able to get it out of my mind ever since I arrived. In Greece, I felt welcomed by the people, as though I belong. I also found an affinity for the people I met. I did feel like this place was a good match for me, and I have been thinking about Greece (and the Greek people) ever since”.*

*Female, Romanian, 39, PhD, Researcher*

Olympia, Greece is her favorite destination that she loves and Thessaloniki, Greece is her ideal destination that she loves. She gives the following definitions of love:

*“When I say that I love Olympia, I mean that I am glad to be there, I feel good, I enjoy what I see and what I do there, I feel more alive, more relaxed, more optimistic; it gives a feeling of elegance and good taste, and most of all a feeling that I belong there”.*

*“When I think of Thessaloniki, I feel a deep desire to go there again and again, to know everything about that place, its past and its present, all the various aspects of its life, to enjoy all its treasures, to understand the people living there. It is that kind of love that wants to know everything about its object”.*

*“...To sum up, both my most loved destinations are in Greece and they give me the feeling that I am more alive, that I belong to these places like I have lived there in a previous life. They also give me a desire to expand my knowledge, to discover new perspectives, to understand better my cultural roots. I would compare this experience with friendship. Like the presence of a friend, my loved destinations make me feel more alive and make life more beautiful and exciting. The word that would best describe my feeling when I am in my loved destination is “harmony”. Every detail, every image and every moment seem to fit perfectly in a coherent whole. Life in the place I love is like a good book in which there is nothing accidental, redundant or artificial, but everything is intelligible and meaningful. I feel like a character in a story where everything I meet belongs to my own emotional life, making me to feel comfortable and relaxed”.*



*Female, Greek, 31, master graduate, Government employee*

She claimed that she loves Amorgos island, Greece, which is both her favorite and ideal place for holidays. She defined love for Amorgos island:

*“Amorgos island makes me feel good inside, more free and care-free, the images fill my brain and heart with feeling of fulfillment and happiness. It’s mostly an energy thing for me; the aura of the place which is subjective, the overall unique atmosphere. I feel a strong positive energy, and breathe better. I feel healthier, more energetic. Also feeling a cosy familiarity with the place even if it is completely different to what I’m used to. Amorgos island generates positive feelings about my own self and the world, including our position in the world. Feeling strong and optimistic. I release the stress of everyday life, feel energetic, attractive, playful, relaxed. I breathe deeper, better”.*

*Female, USA, 65, master graduate, retired nurse*

She loves Greece (most favorite and ideal loved destination for holidays) According to her:

*“I love the people of Greece and the warmth values of the Greek family. I feel that Greek people love me back... I totally admire the uniqueness of the Greek Family values, it makes me appreciate and discover my family values. Greek people make me glad and I feel a strong connection with them. Moreover, I feel that I find myself in Greece, I am calm, peaceful and happy when being there. Greece helps me define myself fully”.*

*Male, German, 49, High School graduate, salesman*

Russia is his favorite loved destination:

*“I love the people of Russia and its culture. When I am in Russia I feel happy and wonderful because there is a mutual understanding with the Russian people. I appreciate more myself when I am in Russia and I feel “complete”, all my senses rise to their fullest. I become a better person because I speculate a lot about the meaning of life. I love Russian people because they understand me and I always feel welcomed. They are very kind and hospitable with me and there is a strong love connection with them”.*



*Male, Italian, 55, university graduate, anthropologist*

He loves Greece (ideal and favorite loved destination):

*“I always feel happy to be in Greece, I like to think that I will always return there. Since the first time I visited Greece I felt a great sense of pleasure in being somehow merged in a land so deep of mythology and history. Having studied Ancient Greek language and history made me feel close and part of this spectacular and genuine world. This is love for me”.*

*Female, Finnish, 32, master graduate, career coach*

*“I love Peru because it is beautiful, both when it comes to the nature as well as the culture and the people. It gives me joy. The place gives me the room for self-expansion and self-realization. It gives me new insights, inspiration, but of course offers the comfort of some form of familiarity or space for me to be the one I really am, similar or different. It makes me feel welcomed”.*

*Female, UK, 23, master graduate, media employee*

She loves Tinos Island, Greece :

*“Loving a destination has to do with the feeling you get when you are there. If you are in love with a destination then you are captivated by it. It’s the full experiential evaluation; the people, the smells, the aesthetics, and the unique experiences, which ultimately result in this feeling of love for a destination .... I feel comfortable there, the place brings out the best version of myself, motivates and inspires me to do what I love, it is actually an inward evaluation; reflecting on myself and the surroundings I am in..... It feels like it is meant to be, I wish I could have experienced this earlier, the feeling that this is what I have been missing and want to keep experiencing it, also the feeling that I am experiencing the authenticity of a place, I am having a unique experience, do not want to leave, can imagine myself living there”.*

*Male, Dutch, 37, PhD, Psychologist*

He loves South Africa:



*“I love going and being there, and I care for the place. Seeing it negatively affected would make me sad... It feels like my soul (and body) is in the right place. Being there helps me to find inner strength and to reorganize myself when I need this... I feel like I belong there, and I feel stimulated”.*

*Female, Greek, 32, master graduate, Human Resources*

She describes her love for Toscana, Italy:

*“Travelling there relaxes me and it gives me a sense of belonging, in a great natural environment, with lots of interesting places to visit along with great beverages and food. Combination of vacations and travelling. I could visit that place 10 times and never get bored of it... I feel relaxed and comfortable at this wonderful place. I know that at the next corner a wonderful surprise might rise up and it has everything that I need during my holidays. It reminds me of days that life is simpler but still very fulfilling and exciting”.*

*Male, Taiwanese, 34, master graduate, economics*

*“I love Barcelona because I have very close friends there, I also love the city and the dynamic cultures in it. I have a strong relationship with my Catalan friends and they treat me as part of their own. We share life together and have built up bilateral relationship over years... This situation allows me to develop more comfortable interaction with locals. The more time I spend there, the more time I feel I could be one of their kind. Thus, I feel a nature harmonic feeling while visiting the city: Both in mind and in actions”.*

*Male, Dutch, 30, master graduate, data analyst*

*“I love Brazil because when I am there I feel as I am in love, meaning that, I get excited with all the differences from the place I am currently living. I see it a bit from an utopian perspective and therefore blinding myself from the negative aspects of the place or of my vacation... I seek always a better understanding of my life and myself. Whenever, I am at this place, I feel that it enlightens me with respect to life in general, my own life, or myself, I definitely create strong feelings towards this place. I believe*



*I am happy and thankful towards that place for providing me such insides. Also, I have always been a very curious and open minded person. Therefore, I feel love when I have a chance of meeting a different culture and customs. It makes me reflect on my own life and appreciate the differences (or similarities) among different cultures”.*

*Male, Greek, 31, master graduate, security engineer*

*“I love Ikaria island in Greece. This means that I’m always looking forward to visiting it, even 3-4 months in advance. It makes me wait for summer without having any other goal. This island improves my self-awareness and confidence, makes me less “needy” as it concerns the materialism and consumerism, makes me smile unexpectedly, creates positive vibes just by thinking about it, even when I am not there”.*

*Male, Greek, 28, master graduate, IT consultant*

*“I love Chrissi island in Greece. I think that loving a place or a destination has mostly to do with your memories and experiences that you have in that place. So, one reason that I love Chrissi island is the good experiences that took in that place. Also, I love this place because I find its physical environment attractive and because it is somewhat remote from the rest of the world, but nevertheless attracts interesting people. I love living on a remote island. I love the sun, the sea, living close to the nature, meeting interesting people and sometimes being alone with my thoughts. Another reason that I love this island is nostalgia. Memories and experiences play a great role for me in love. There are not many things to say about that feeling, I can only say that is like going to my high school yard or my student apartment (I love those places) and it’s a feeling that grows over time. Of course, I love that I feel comfortable in this place, meet people with the same interests and feel close to nature. I also love this place because it makes me feel calm and helps me connect with myself and other persons. But the most important factor for me is that I can feel free and having no boundaries and restrictions about the things that I can do in that place.*

*Only this place can give me this kind of freedom...”.*

*Female, USA, 48, master graduate, school counselor*



*“I love Greece means that I love the beach, the people, the vibe I get when being there, the food, the music, and the very comfortable feeling of being “at home”... I feel welcome, accepted, and joyful to be among the local people. It is just easy to communicate with them and it makes me feel “at home”. I also have a long term relationship with Greece since I have revisited it numerous times because I truly enjoy being there. I have also made friendships there”.*

*Male, Australian, 30, university graduate, civil servant*

Berlin is his most favorite destination that he does love:

*“I love Berlin means that I have a good feeling when I am there. It feels different, but still familiar because I have spent much time there. I have good memories of the place and can discover new places whenever I go. I feel at home in this place. Love for me means having a long-term connection to a place, it feels like having another home. I mean that when I arrive in this place, I do not have to consciously think where I am going- my legs just take me to the places I need to go. The long term relationship means that I feel invested in Berlin and care about it. In general, I love to connect with people when being there, to interact with locals and other tourists as well. Berlin is a place where people create a good atmosphere, where there is a welcome environment. This connection makes me feel like I can belong in that place as well, that I am not a stranger or foreigner. The special connection does not have to be based on language- it can be felt with smiles, body language or just a positive attitude of the people”.*

Japan is his most ideal destination for vacations and he describes his love for it:

*“I love Japan because for me it has an exotic ideal and is completely different from any other place I have visited so far. For me, it came with an expectation that the place would be ideal, and when I visited it really was amazing. I love it because it fulfilled my expectations and more. I felt that I was in a completely different world almost, different to my daily reality”.*



*Female, USA, 48, PhD, Lecturer in Philosophy*

*“Love for Greece is about my desire to visit it again and again, because the place has something unique to offer which I cannot find anywhere else. I can identify with the spirit of people there. People are lively and full of energy, unlike where I live”.*

*Female, Italian, 40, master graduate, civil engineer*

She loves Greece (most favorite destination). She explained love as following:

*“I love the uniqueness of Greece. Its landscape is amazing and its history is unique. I have read Greek history and for me being there is a unique experience. The place is inspiring and I feel excited every time I am there. The Greek hospitality is one of a kind and the Greek people are very friendly. I love the place and its people. The hospitality of Greek people is amazing. I feel part of their community. I receive positive feelings and they make me feel happy... when I am in Greece I am inspired by the place and it helps me to realize the important values of life, which are happiness and peace of mind. Also, I practice my Greek language skills and I become better and better every time I visit it. Greece contributes to become a better and self-actualized person.”.*

Spain is her ideal destination for holidays and she describes her love about it as:

*“Spain is very beautiful. I love its architecture, food and music. I enjoy myself a lot there. It reminds me of home”.*

*Female, South African, 32, university graduate, HR*

*“The Greek islands are breathtaking. Whichever island you go to, it will melt your heart away. Each island is unique and beautiful. People are warm-hearted, seas are clear and attractions are stunning. I love Santorini island! The moment you step onto Santorini soil, you will fall in love. No words can describe the view from every part of this island. It is a romantic and a wow factor island. I have a passion for beauty and romance. Santorini brings that out in me. If you’ve been to Santorini, you will understand the love you can feel for such a place. It’s definitely a love at first sight kind of feeling for me. You can feel the clean air and hospitality. No better place to relax and enjoy beauty at its best”.*





*Male, USA, 45, master graduate, Lawyer*

He loves Italy (favorite destination) and Greece (ideal destination)

*“I love Italy means that I feel relaxed and comfortable there. I love the atmosphere and the food. I receive relaxing vibes and the people there are very friendly. I love its unique history and architecture. I always think about it when I am not there and it makes me feel happy when I am far away. I cannot wait to visit it again”.*

*“When I say that I love Greece I mean that I want to live there one day. The life there is amazing and I would love to have a life like this. I hope in few years to be able to move there and to become a part of this relaxing and easy going life style. This is what matters to me mostly. I feel this place like my home and no other place has made me feel like this. Greek people enjoy their lives to their fullest. Living on a Greek island would be ideal, far away from the hectic way of life. I feel peaceful in Greece. I feel happy deep inside when I am there, I can work more on myself and my needs, I realize the true values in life which do not have to do with consumerism and materialistic world but with investing in personal relationships and yourself”.*

.....

*“I completely match with Italy and Greece. Only there I feel happy and I can say that I have found the meaning of life. I have become one with these places and I want to live in Greece”.*

*Female, Colombian, 34, PhD, Assistant Professor*

*“I love a specific farm in Colombia. I enjoy going there every time I am on vacations. I look forward to being there. I always have good memories from this place... I feel in balance when I’m there. It feels like going home, like being in the arms of a mother earth where everything is in balance. There is no rush... I have been in that place so many times that is now part of me. This place is part of my soul and has helped me to become what I’m today”.*





*Female, German, 32, master graduate, Coach & Consultant*

*“ I love South Italy. I mean that the place and the people are somewhat familiar for me, because I have been there many times, but at the same time they are so different from my everyday life. The people and the characteristics of the place somehow define “freedom”, “relaxation” and “fun” for me and make me act and feel different from my role in everyday life at home – it works instantly when I get there.... I have created relationships with some people there, they represent a lifestyle I do not necessarily want to adopt completely but it is a perfect balance for my everyday life, they make me feel always on “vacation” ... I change when I am in South Italy and I love who I am, when I am there”.*

*Male, Dutch, 29, master graduate, IT consultant*

*“Thasos island is a destination that I love. A place where I feel at home even though it is far away from home. It’s like meeting a person that you feel like you’ve known for a long time. Love for me means being able to enjoy the things I love most, being relaxed and having fun. The experience is a big part of the love...relaxed, happy, amazed, these are exactly the words that I would use to describe me there. This is because of the people, the scenery, the place and the things I do there”.*

*Female, 31, Greek, master graduate, HR*

*“I love Italy means that it makes me feel happy when I am there. I have the feeling of being free from time, work, responsibilities. It is a place where I can enjoy the food, the freshness of the air, the heat, the beach, and the people are hospitable... I have been studying Italian for a long time, and every time I am there I am trying to connect with the locals in their language and they are really open to it, and I feel part of the country myself... I always felt a connection with Italy, the language, the nature of the people, the mentality, the food, I just want to keep visiting this place”.*

*Male, Irish, 34, PhD, psychologist*

*“I love Athens because there I feel unique, excited and deeply happy, feelings that I cannot have in any other place. Also, my personality matches with the personality of*



*Athens city and I find myself there...Every time I visit Athens, I live vividly, passionately, feel more outgoing and socialized and love the lifestyle of the city”.*

He has not visited Barbados (ideal destination), but he stated that he loves this place and he described it as the following:

*“I love Barbados because when I think of it I feel excited, adventurous, passionate and an extreme desire to discover my true self there. This love feeling for Barbados derives from my contact with its culture and people” ...*

*“Generally, love for a place is about discovering facets of my personality, self-definition and spiritual awakening”.*

*Male, Greek, 29, master graduate, agricultural consultant*

*“I love Alexandroupoli, Greece, because I have good memories from previous vacations there, I know people from there whom I like and love. It is a beautiful place. All these make me feel peaceful and it is like being at home, without being at home... whenever I do not feel ok with myself I go to this place, I take a long walk at the beach, I eat at my favorite restaurant, I have a coffee at my favorite café and it helps me feel better, it is like this place gives me strength to carry on with my daily routine... I am visiting this place since I was a child. Due to that, it fills my mind with nice memories and a warm feeling in my heart”.*

*Female, USA, 20, student*

*“I love Buffalo (most favorite place), NY, means that I feel at home there. It is like a second home for me, do not feel like I’m visiting it... I often revisit the same place and therefore create a long term relationship and memories with it. Being there can trigger happy, good memories from the past”.*

*“I love Greece (ideal place for vacations) means that I am really fascinated by the Greek people and culture. I feel a kinship and understanding of/to Greece and the Greek people”.*



*Female, Greek, 24, university graduate, psychologist*

*“I love Crete island. I mean that I have a pleasant feeling when I am in this place and I miss it very often... I have been there many times, I have spent plenty of time there both alone and with friends, I have experienced different emotions, both pleasant and unpleasant. It kind of feels like a second home for me, which I will continue to visit in the future.... Given that it isn't possible to visit this place as often as I used to and I would like to, a sense of nostalgia is frequent for me. There are those mixed feelings: on the one hand, a feeling of sadness because I can't find myself exactly the way I used to in this place and on the other hand, a feeling of delight because there are so many things to remember, so many things that will always make me feel connected with this place and desire to visit it again and again”.*

*Female, Mexican, 53, master graduate, mathematician*

*“I love Greece... I feel close with the Greek people and their feelings, I love the food (because it has a good flavor but most of all because it is prepared with dedication and love), the music,..., in a word, it makes me feel at home, especially when I am in Olympia... I love and feel connected with the locals... after having visited it three times, I started learning the Greek language to communicate better with them and I see it as an expression of my admiration and appreciation of the Greek philoxenia, language and culture”.*

*Male, Italian, 35, master graduate, architect*

*“I love the street art of Berlin (most favorite destination), the multicultural society and the plenty choices for having fun. Art in Berlin is unique and walking on the streets is a breathtaking and unique experience for me...”*

*“I love Greece (most ideal destination) because of its unique landscape, history and people. I feel creative when I am in Greece, because it inspires me. I always want to go back there. I miss it!”*



*“Traveling to Greece or Berlin is an investment to myself, it boosts my mood and my ego. When I am there I meditate and discover myself and what I need in life... I miss these places very often. I think of them a lot and feel happy when I think of them”.*

*Female, UK, 36, master graduate*

*“Love Greece means that I love the serenity, peace, calmness, natural beauty and tranquility there. Love for Greece has also to do with discovering myself, it inspires me to be a better person and to find out more about myself... I wish I could stay in Greece forever....live there and experience the place deeply”.*

*Female, Italian, 39, university graduate, nurse*

*“Holland (most favorite destination) is very unique and beautiful country for me. I love the way of living, the landscape is amazing. My lifestyle matches with that of locals and I feel part of this country, since my passion is cycling and Holland is the paradise of cycling.... just me and my bicycle, in a relaxing and breathtaking natural environment! Could I ask for more?... I love the people of this place, I become part of this country through my relationships with locals and my interests... I feel that I belong there and would like to move there and live. The Dutch way of living is perfect for me. I am fond of that lifestyle.”*

*Male, French, 41, university graduate, accountant*

*“Loving Greece means that I love the people of Greece! They are very helpful and hospitable. They are kind and I totally cherish their happy way of living. I have become part of the locals’ life and this is amazing. I met a new way of living in Greece, which I follow in my country, as well.... For example, I very often eat Greek food, I listen to Greek music and I hang out with Greeks in my country, so that I can get the Greek, amazing vibes when I am not there..... Greeks make me happy and cheerful. Also, they have made me part of their lives and they are part of my life too. Every year I visit Greece to meet the people I know there”.*



*“I love Switzerland (ideal destination) because I love snow. I love snowboarding especially in this country because the snow spots are really amazing. Every time I am there I feel excited and free .... It fills my heart and my mind with warm feelings”.*

*Male, Canadian, 52, PhD, Chemical engineer*

*“I definitely love Greece! I love Greece means that it has stayed at my heart many years. When I was young, I just wanted to explore and visit many different places. When I became older, I realized what I really want from a destination. What I really desire is what Greece offered to me from the first time I visited it. The memories of the greek hospitality, songs, nature’s endless bounty, dazzling coasts, meals and celebrations left a mark on my heart. I visit Greece for the last 20 years. It rejuvenates my mind. It is a long-lasting relationship. Love for Greece is the grandeur of its ancient sites and history, the genuine smiles of locals, their warm embraces and happiness when they meet me again. I do not feel a stranger in Greece, I feel like a local, like being home. Definitely my love for Greece has to do with how locals treat me. They make me feel like one of them, they are very hospitable and friendly towards me. Hospitality and friendliness of locals is a highly appreciated unique Greek trait. I have created strong friendship relationships with Greek people throughout the years. I feel them like my family members and they are one major reason for visiting Greece every year. I love them, they are my people! Moreover, Greece is the only place in the world, which delights all my senses, my soul and mind. Greece feeds my mind with deeper philosophical meanings and values, I feel fulfilled”.*

*Female, Australian, 37, university graduate, journalist*

*“I love Spain means that I feel amazed and captivated by its picturesque cities and its lesser known autonomous communities. In Barcelona, I feel very excited of being surrounded by so many unique art galleries, festivals and architectural masterpieces. The city is overflowing with architectural splendor. Its imposing architecture and cultural heritage inspire me and its buzzing nightlife makes me feel more alive. I have become more creative and knowledgeable by having visited spanish art galleries, autonomous communities and museums”.*



In the following paragraphs the articulations and descriptions of some of the respondents with respect to similarities/differences among destination, brand and interpersonal love are listed.

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#### INTERPERSONAL VERSUS DESTINATION LOVE

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*Male, Italian, 55, university graduate, anthropologist*

*“Interpersonal love depends on different people and can change over time. Love for a place is more constant because the place has something more intense and stable in it”.*

*Male, Irish, 34, PhD, psychologist*

*“A point of distinction between interpersonal and destination love is that in interpersonal love there is passion and romance... an additional difference between them is that ,for me, destination love is more permanent whereas interpersonal (romantic)love can be either forever or temporary”.*

*Female, Greek, 31, master graduate, HR*

*“Both invoke strong and similar feelings. The difference: Destination love is one-sided while interpersonal is two-sided and could be more intense and complicated as other person’s feelings are involved”.*

*Female, Greek, 24, university graduate, psychologist*

*“In my opinion.....both in destination love and in interpersonal love, one can taste either pleasant or unpleasant emotions. In the case of interpersonal love, one may need much more time and effort to cope with rapidly alternating conditions that come*



*as a result of human interactions, compared to destination/place love which is rather unilateral”.*

*Male, German, 65, master graduate, archaeologist*

*“For me they tend to be similar: in both, there is mutuality. In interpersonal love there is mutuality between people, in destination love there is mutuality between me and the place. Place gives me peace of mind, happiness, serenity...and I do take care of the place, for example I clean it, I take part in actions for its preservation, because i love it.... Taking care of the place is a sign of my love for it, since I appreciate all what I receive from it (happiness, serenity, peace of mind)”.*

*Female, French, 34, master graduate, engineer*

*“Both destination and interpersonal love help define myself and become a better person. Destination love is more self centric whereas interpersonal love takes two individuals to exist. Both are equally important for me”.*

*Female, German, 33, master graduate, HR*

*“they are similar... but feelings for a person is more concrete, more based on mutuality and intellectual as well as physical interaction...”.*

*Male, French, 48, master graduate, artist*

*“for me both kinds of love tend to be similar because the strength and deepness of love feelings in both cases are the same when it has to do with people (partners/friends/family for interpersonal love and locals for destination love)...I have developed strong relationships with locals of my favorite destination that have changed my life a lot in a better way and also the same holds for my interpersonal relationships too”.*





*Male, Italian, 35, master graduate, architect*

*“destination love has to do more with my self, it is self-oriented love, I invest more in myself when I visit my favorite place, whereas in interpersonal love I invest in the relationship itself”.*

*Female, Greek, 35, PhD, secondary education teacher*

*“Destination love is approaching the meaning of interpersonal love. It is not exactly the same, but both meanings tend to be similar because they have the same base. The base of love; the feelings (positive feelings that are developed by being around people and situations that are enjoyable) and the strong desire of being surrounded by loved people and unique, enjoyable situations”.*

*Male, Australian, 30, university graduate, civil servant*

*“I think interpersonal love comes with completely different expectations and levels of emotional engagement. While I believe there are some emotions and feelings which could be the same, interpersonal love is much less objective. For example, I would not assess and judge someone I love the same way I would assess a destination when I go there. Also, if I am disappointed by a place, this would have less impact on me than if I am disappointed by a person”.*

*Male, Spanish, 64, university graduate, teacher*

*“they are different, because I can live without traveling to my favorite place, but I cannot live without my partner and friends”*





*Female, Palestinian, 35, master graduate, director*

*“They are similar in a way that you love a particular destination despite that there are other destinations that have the same characteristics... but you pick this specific destination every single time... I don’t remember how and why I fell in love with Italy and I believe people feel the same when they love someone. They are different in a way that you can easily be objective about destination in your judgment and it is not complex to evaluate it. While your disappointment from your favorite destination- if you experience bad things there- can be handled easily, it is not the same with feelings toward humans”.*

*Male, USA, 40, PhD, academic in Philosophy*

*“Interpersonal love is more other-regarding insofar as it involves wanting the best for those you love.... Love for a place is more self-regarding insofar as it involves one’s own well-being and fulfillment”.*

*Female, UK, 25, university graduate, media*

*“Simplicity and lack of reciprocity are the main differences and I think the second contributes to the first. The destination object of your affections can’t ‘love’ you back or judge you or hurt you and you fall in love with a place in the knowledge that your feelings will be uncomplicated by how the place feels about you. Destination love is often wholly positive and not associated with guilt or jealousy i.e. you can change your favourite place, fall in love with a new place easily without causing upsetting”.*

*Male, Canadian, 52, PhD, chemist*

*“both interpersonal and destination love tend to be similar for me. Both make me feel happy and excited. They also contribute to my well being and discover new facets of my personality. For example, my partner makes me feel more extroverted, socializing person. The same holds for Greece. When I am in Greece, I am more outgoing, I hang*



*out with my local friends and I become one of them. Both love types make me a better, more extroverted person”.*

*Male, UK, 43, master graduate, pharmacist*

*“Destination love is an absolutely happy emotion, whereas interpersonal love includes both happiness and sadness. People can let you down easily, whereas places can not. My loved place will always be there to offer me great and unique moments, whereas people might come into and leave from my life”.*

*Female, Chinese, 47, university graduate, graphic designer*

*“For me destination love is more intense than interpersonal love. Nepal has healed my mind and soul, it always makes me feel happy and peaceful. I feel refreshed and reborn when being there. I have become a more open-minded person. Destination love is all about my peace of mind, self-balance and well-being. On the other hand, in my personal relationships I always have to give something in order to take something back. Sometimes, I feel sad and moody when being in romantic relationships, because there are, inevitably, arguments with my partner... This does not happen with my loved place”.*

*Female, French, 53, master graduate, geologist*

*“When it comes to romantic relationships, people are like shooting stars, their brightness sometimes fade away, whereas Greece is always amazing and captivating, it never disappoints me”.*

*Female, Italian, 50, master graduate, medical doctor*

*“Family love is the most sacred one... but Kefalonia is also a part of our family, we spend every summer there, we eat Kefalonian food, some of our nicest family memories are from our vacations on Kefalonia island, our house in Italy is full of photos from Kefalonia...”*



*Male, USA, 59, high school graduate, farmer*

*“Destination love is an extreme like, a clear preference over the other places... interpersonal love is deeper, more intense and stronger feeling”.*

*Male, USA, 52, PhD, Ancient history expert*

*“They are different.... Even though they both include happy feelings, my love for Olympia has to do more with self-investment and self-expansion... Interpersonal love has to do more with romantic feelings, intimacy, care, devotion and affection”.*

## BRAND VERSUS DESTINATION LOVE

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*Female, Greek, 29, university graduate, sales person*

*“Destination love is intriguing and it is about unique experiences and memories that last a lifetime whereas brand love is about trustworthiness, excellent service quality and safety feeling”.*

*Female, USA, 37, master graduate, social media expert*

*“They both give me prestige and the desirable social image...”.*

*Female, USA, 29, university graduate, fashion blogger*

*“...both make me extremely happy, boost my image and ego, which is very important for me and I feel unique”.*

*Male, Dutch, 54, university graduate, linguistics*

*“similarities: A sign of love for me is that I am a loyal visitor of my favorite destination and a loyal consumer of my favorite brand. Differences: However, love*



*for China is more about expanding my chinese language skills and knowledge, whereas love for KLM is about safety, comfort, trustworthiness and reputation”.*

*Female, Australian, 39, university graduate, city policy analyst*

*“Brand love is about exceptional brand features, destination love is about evoking strong emotions that I cannot experience anywhere else”.*

*Male, UK, 54, master graduate*

*“Brand love is merely about brand’s quality, I could substitute a loved brand easier than a loved destination. Destination love is about unlocking all my senses and feeling happy, passionate, carefree”.*

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#### BRAND VERSUS INTERPERSONAL LOVE

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*Male, Spanish, 41, PhD, engineer*

*“I live in Holland, so I prefer KLM over all the other available aircompanies. I have a loyalty membership card and I really enjoy its Platinum benefits. Brand and interpersonal love are not comparable in terms of emotional intensity. Interpersonal love is a strong feeling whereas my love for KLM is about my strong, and I could say exclusive, preference over all the other available aircompanies as well as exceptional traveling benefits and experience”.*

*Male, Greek, 27, high school graduate, bartender*

*“I love the NORTH WEST clothing brand... I love its style. It absolutely fits my style and the majority of my jackets and hoodies is of this brand..I love how I look when wearing this brand, but love for people is stronger and more intense”.*



*Female, UK, 21, student*

*“Love Louboutin's style and uniqueness. I feel more beautiful, stylish, attractive and confident when wearing these high-heels shoes. Both(Louboutin shoes and my boyfriend) make me feel happy, desirable, attractive and confident”.*

*Male, UK, 54, Master graduate*

*“I love Hilton hotels... Actually, I love Hilton's service quality, it makes me feel happy, joyful. The personnel is amazing, I really enjoy every single moment when being there...Brand love is about loving the superiority of this hotel brand... On the other hand, interpersonal love is about taking care of my beloved ones, strong family/friendship emotional bonds, intense feelings, such as passion for my other half, romantic moments...”.*

*Female, Italian, 21, student*

*“I own a mini cooper car. When I bought it, it was one of my happiest moments in life. I always wanted to buy a mini cooper. It is very stylish and it has a stunning and vintage design. I am a vintage lover and my image is very important for me. So, I could say that we match perfectly with my mini cooper. It gives me the elegance and stylish image I want to have and I feel very happy. So, my love for mini cooper has to do mostly with its retro style and my image, whereas interpersonal love has to do with caring, romance and mutual understanding”*

*Female, Greek, 31, master graduate, HR*

*“I love Scotch and Soda! Brand love is about wanting to buy more and more products of this brand. However, my favorite brand can be more easily replaced by another brand or be combined with the consumption of other brands... my beloved ones cannot be replaced...Brand love cannot generate as strong feelings as interpersonal love”.*



*Male, UK, 46, master graduate, lawyer*

*“I definitely love my Volvo car. My grandfather used to have one when I was a kid... and we used to go on trips together. Memories about this old Volvo car are very vivid on my mind. I have connected my grandfather with Volvo. It reminds me of him. Of course, I love the quality of Volvo, its technical features and design. It is a very trustworthy car. I feel special when driving it. I think your car is a sign of your tastes, social status and preferences. You show others who you are. Of course I cannot equate brands with loved humans. They are completely different. Interpersonal love is about affection, dedication, emotional attachment, respect... whereas brand love is more superficial. However, some brands can remind you of your loved ones, like my Volvo reminds me of my grandfather...that's why I love it. For me, love has mainly to do with the human factor, which is more evident in interpersonal and destination love than brand love”.*

*Female, Dutch, 37, master graduate, product manager*

*“I love Birkenstock shoes! They make me feel stylish and comfortable. Birkenstock matches perfectly my style, needs and tastes. I only buy Birkenstock shoes for summer. The materials are of an excellent quality. However, my brand love is based on materialism and thus it is not deep, whereas interpersonal love is a very deep emotion and a fundamental, biological human need”.*

*Female, Italian, 30, university graduate, sales*

*“I absolutely love Chanel Chance Tendre Eau de Toilette Spray..I am obsessed with it. I always feel elegant, sophisticated and classy when wearing it. It makes me smell sweet and fresh and I get many compliments from my friends, colleagues and of course my boyfriend... However, I love my boyfriend more deeply than my perfume...because there is romance and bonding between us”.*



*Female, Australian, 21, student*

*“I love my Apple iphone, it is part of my everyday life, it helps organizing my everyday schedule, it has an amazing design and quality, it is the best brand in the market...I cannot imagine living without my beloved ones and my iphone”.*

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#### STUDY 1 (INTERVIEWS)

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*Female, USA, 48, PhD, Professor of Philosophy*

*032: “I love Greece means that I feel a very aspirational connection with the Greek people, one reason is because I am Greek, I was born here in Greece and my parents moved to New York when I was three years old, so naturally, biologically I feel strongly connected to them...when I have any kind of communication with them I feel that we are in the same plane, that we have mutual understanding, and that for me is not an experience I often have where I live in the USA....we have the same spirit... Greece stimulates all my senses (touch, sight etc), I experience myself more fully while I am here, having a kind of access /contact with my self is very fizzing, so love in that respect is enjoying, happiness, feelings, perceptions that are not unleashed in any other place I go, but there is also love in the sense that I feel that there is more understanding between me and the people here, so there is something about people’s souls here that I feel akin to my own soul and that also generates an intimate connection that is characterized as a kind of love relationship for me”.*

*Male, Italian, 41, university graduate, Hotel owner*

*089: Elafonisos island in Greece is my favorite destination for vacations and I visit it every year for the last 22 years. The first time, I visited Elafonisos island accidentally ...I met some other tourists on the street and they suggested me to go there and because I am a curious person, I visited it and I fell in love with it directly, basically “we” felt in love...Elafonisos island and I...the simplicity of the island and its natural beauty are amazing...for me love for a destination has to do with my memories, with*



*experiences I have lived there and the things the place offers me...such as the simplicity of the locals, with whom you can have a coffee or beer, chat, relax and be yourself or the energy of the place itself. On Simos beach (most famous beach of the island), I become one with the nature, I feel grounded”.*

*“Mani peninsula, Greece, is my ideal destination...I also love it because there I find peace of mind, serenity, and I go away from my everyday routine. Mani’s nature is wild, dry, rocky and even though for most people this may be restrictive, for me it is ideal...it is unique...its energy is unique! The people of Mani are kind. My mind goes to its “right” position there, when I feel that it “goes away” for a bit...”*

*“I love Greece, I live in Greece now and I have my own hotel”*

*Male, French, 30, university graduate, agriculture expert*

*084: “I love Amorgos island, Greece! I am emotionally attached with Amorgos, since I go every year there from when I was 2 years old with my family! Locals have seen me growing up, every year I am there with them...everybody knows me there, when I arrive at the port I meet the locals, they love me and I love them...I have built strong relationships with them throughout the years...Last year, I also visited Evoia island in Greece, it was nice, I liked it but I will not go back...I simply belong to Amorgos island! I have assimilated with the Greek culture, for example I go to Amorgos island to pick the olives from the trees with the locals... I feel bonded with the locals after so many years. I have even a Greek first name, Yiannis, I feel Greek and I speak Greek fluently”.*

*Female, Hungarian, 34, PhD, Statistician*

*107: “I keep on returning in South Africa, it has a nice combination of city and culture that is amazing and also the nature...I usually go to Stellenbosch, because I have friends there...I have been there three times...I love Stellenbosch, I mean that I miss it very often, I really enjoy being there, I already have friends there and I feel like being home...when I arrive there, I feel I arrive home, because I know the people*





*I want to meet, the restaurants I want to eat, the places I want to visit...it is a feeling of belonging for me”.*

*Male, Portuguese, 32, master graduate, city manager*

*096: “My favorite destination for vacations is Berlin. I love Berlin...I mean that it makes me feel alive when I am there, it makes me feel connected to the entire city, it makes me feel part of something big, where I can be myself...Berlin is a well-known/ “strong” destination for its street art, which is one of my favorite personal hobbies (e.g., street art)”.*

*“My ideal destination for vacations is Buenos Aires, Argentina, but I have not visited it yet. I know many Argentinian people and I am informed about their country. I could say that I love Buenos Aires, but not as much as Berlin, which I have visited...I mean that I know for sure I would be happy in Buenos Aires, I would not feel that I should go away from there, I could live there...I will visit it in the near future and I have suggested to my relatives and friends to visit it”.*

*Female, Spanish, 59, university graduate, tourist guide*

*“090: I love Greece, I visit it the last 25 years. I also could say that I love Italy, but not as much as Greece, since I have lived some years in Greece. I first came in Greece as a tour guide. Greece for me is the islands, the beaches and its people. I love its beaches, they fulfill my soul...also I love its people... it is very easy to make friends in Greece, I love its atmosphere, the Greek way of living...for example, the locals are very simple and happy and they make me feel happy as well, I feel that we have the same spirit. I love Lefkada island, because I want to go every time I am on vacations there, it is a traditional Greek place, not very crowded ...the color of the sea there is unique...I have not found it anywhere else. When I am there, I have a great time and I want to live there”.*



*Male, Brazilian, 30, master graduate, economics/ data analyst*

079: “ *Berlin is my favorite destination for vacations...I have visited it eight times...I love it, because it has amazing street art and I feel a warm feeling there like it is a living organism, people are very friendly, alternative, liberate, everyone is him/herself, you are yourself there...love for Berlin is about feeling at ease there, feeling at home and welcome, that already gives for me a sign of love relation... I am also very interested in the city itself, I want to discover more and I always want to go back there...that is also a sign of love for me*”.

*Female, USA, 63, PhD, Professor of Philosophy*

033: “*My specialty is Greek culture and that’s why I love Greece. I studied Greek philosophy and philosophy culture made me visit Greece. Athens is such a great democratic city...I love its culture, the history and its contribution to (human) prosperity. Greece represents the power in my own soul, it helps to keep me (spiritually) awake!*”

*Male, USA, 39, PhD, Professor of Philosophy*

“*My favorite destination for vacations is Greece and I have visited it many times...I came the first time as a student with my professor, who was from Greece and I enjoyed myself so much. Later, I became a professor of Philosophy and I bring my students now in Greece. The hospitality of Greece is the first thing it comes to mind, I have many friends in Greece, they invite me in Greece, I stay with their families, we have dinners all together, everyone in Greece is so welcome, I think it goes back to the ancient Greek idea of “(philo)xenia”, the idea of welcoming strangers. I think there is something romantic about the country. I love Greece because the Greek people feel things passionately, live life passionately, do not do anything quietly...I love it means that I live deeply and meaningfully in Greece.... I accidentally discovered Samos island for a conference and whenever I come to Greece I try to visit it...The water there is beautiful, unique, and since I was raised in Florida, it reminds me a bit of home, even if it is different*”.



*Male, Japanese, 64, master graduate, teacher*

*043, 044: "I love culture and museums. I love Greece, since it has a rich history.*

*Greeks enjoy their lives, they are alive, their family ideals are amazing....it is completely different from Japan, where I feel under pressure and the way of life there is hectic...I feel moved about the Greek culture, the people are very friendly and relaxed, I love the way of living in Greece and I would love to live in Greece... I have visited Greece four times...I love the Greek culture very much, I even proposed my wife to marry me in Athens's national museum under the statue of Poseidon, many years ago, and I have many, good, unique memories from Greece".*

*Female, Romanian, 38, PhD, Researcher*

*"I absolutely love Greece, because it is a beautiful country, with warm people and rich in civilization. Greek philosophy is my field of specialization. I would define love for Greece as a feeling of belonging, it is a place that I want to see again and again, I feel alive here. I feel influenced by Greece, I am interested in its culture, I love it for its present, not only for its past".*

*Female, USA/Philippine, 65, master graduate, retired*

*105: "I have visited Greece many times. Greece reminds me of home. I absolutely love Greece. I mean that I found myself in Greece, I feel peaceful and very harmonious. I love the Greek people, they are very friendly, hospitable and kind. They make me feel like I am home, they give me so much love and I also give them love back. It is a mutual respect and love for each other. For me a destination is its people and I feel a kind of a bi-directional relationship with it.... I will keep on visiting Greece again and again until I die".*



*Female, Lithuanian, 28, university graduate, translator*

*103: “Nepal is my favorite destination for vacations. It is a spiritual place, it inspires me. Love for Nepal means that I feel a spiritual connection with the place, I feel that I have been there before, it attracts me, which is difficult to describe... I feel at home there, because the locals are somehow similar with Japanese people...I was raised in Japan. People are very kind, friendly and straight forward. I will go back”.*

*“Butan is my ideal destination for vacations, it is close to Nepal. I have not visited it, but I know people from there and I would love to visit it. Butan is also a spiritual place, there is something deep and profound there. I love Butan through its people. I cannot think of any other place similar in the world. It is unique for me and probably the most safe place in the world”.*

*Female, Slovakian, 22, university graduate, tour escort*

*085: “For me lately my favorite destination is China. I have been there for nearly a year, I have spent 10 months of my life there. I am studying Chinese language that’s why I went there. China is so different from the European countries, I love Chinese culture and Chinese history, the buildings there are so different, the people are very different, I like their lifestyle. China is a vast country and the nature is very beautiful, many beautiful temples there...I love China because I have spent really long time there and I have visited many different Chinese places and I love the people, I love Chinese characters, in China you have anything you want, desert, mountains, sea...I think that I found myself in China, even though I can’t imagine living in China permanently, because you will always be a foreigner there as a European!”.*

*“My ideal or dream destinations for vacations are Thailand and Cuba. Thailand for me is one big party and the lifestyle in Cuba is relaxing and chilling. However, I cannot tell that I love them because I have not visited them yet”.*



*Female, Slovakian, 39, high school graduate, tourist guide*

*086: “Rhodes island in Greece is my favorite destination. I have worked and lived there for long seasons. These were the best years of my life! The first time I visited Rhodes, it was not my choice, but I was sent there to work as a tourist guide...However, I loved Rhodes from the first sight! I absolutely love Rhodes, I have very nice memories from there, I feel like I am at home there”.*

*“I also love Peloponisos, Greece, which is my ideal destination for vacations. I love it, because I feel comfortable there and its history is very rich. Also, it is not much spoiled of tourism, like Rhodes. However, I love Rhodes a bit more than Peloponisos”.*

*Female, Italian, 28, high school graduate, tour escort*

*073: “I love Israel, which is very particular region, the people there are open-minded, when I go there, I feel uniquely, like nowhere else. I love Israel means that I feel and I am honest with my soul there, I am in contact with the real culture and the country. I also love Greece for the same reasons...I learn a lot from my visits to Israel and Greece. People in both countries are very warm when they welcome you, they teach me a lot. I feel passionate about Greece! I want to bring my family to Greece, to spend vacations together here”.*

*Male, Spanish, 32, master graduate, food analyst*

*072: “Greece is my favorite destination for vacations. Greece is a very hospitable country, rich in history, it has many places to visit, many islands that are different from one another, nice food and architecture. I could say that I love Greece. I mean that I love the culture of the country, I love the people of Greece... when I am in Greece, people are very kind with me and they show a lot of hospitality and love towards me, which makes me feel like I am home, my own country. Also if I have never had the chance to visit it again, I would really mind”.*



*“South France is my ideal destination for vacations. I have visited it once. It has a lot of history and great scenery, the people are not so friendly as in Greece, but other than that it is a great destination to visit. I could not say that I love south France, I only like it”.*

*Female, Colombian, 34, master graduate, lawyer*

*046: “Spain is my favorite destination for vacations and I have visited it several times. The cultures of Latin America’s countries and Spain are similar, also we have the same language, Spanish food is nice, people like to party a lot. I absolutely love Spain, I could even live there, if I could. I feel safe and I enjoy myself a lot there. I will visit Spain again for sure”.*

*Female, USA, 48, PhD, Philosopher*

*024: “My favorite and ideal destination for vacations is Greece. It is my first time in Greece and I am in love with it! It was a life goal to visit Greece. Greece has a lot of history, sunshine and very friendly people. I feel safe in Greece. I love Greece because of its history, I am a Philosophy professor ... and being able to see the Acropolis, the site where Plato’s academy was built, that is amazing for me....and to see all that history with all of the things you associate with modern days, for example the graffiti, which I know that seems bad on ancient sites, but to me it perfectly shows how much history there is even in graffiti artists, who are born with history...also the metro station is right next to the ancient sites... this blending of old and new is amazing. Love for Greece also means that I enjoy my time in Greece, it is a valuable experience for me since there are a lot to learn, I would come back if I could. I feel welcome, happy and relaxed”.*

*Male, Australian, 30, university graduate, government service*

*“My favorite destination for vacations is Japan. I have visited it once. Everything looks different from where I live...people are different in the way they look, dress, and interact with other people...their lifestyle seems to be foreign and strange but at the*



*same time familiar, since it is a western type of country. I definitely think that I love Japan, because I felt very comfortable there, it is a place that makes me feel that I can spend a lot of time there and go back there...Love Japan means that I think about it a lot, memories keep coming back, and the desire to go back there more than once”.*

*“Berlin for me is an ideal place for vacations, I go there twice per year, there is a mix of people, it is safe, everyone is friendly, you get the best out of everything. Berlin combines everything I want. I have studied there. Berlin is very multicultural and open, you can express yourself freely there, it does not feel crowded, it is easy going and historical as well. I do love Berlin because I have spent a lot of time there, I feel comfortable, feel very familiar when I am there, like it is my second home, and of course I have many nice memories from there”.*

*Female, USA, 47, master graduate, school counselor*

*070: “Because I live in a cold climate, in February I go to Jamaica every year and I plan to do that for the rest of my life, I have been there 24 times so far. During the summer I love to visit Europe, especially Greece. Greece is my favorite summer destination for vacations. I have visited it 12 times. I love the Greek people, food, music, the white architecture like on Santorini island, the beach and the green (nature) are amazing, the people are very friendly. I love Greece means that I feel at home there, at ease, excited and never disappointed and I love the Greek people. For February, Jamaica is my favorite winter destination, it is easier to access it than Greece, the beach, the music and the people are also amazing. The environment is very chilling, people are very friendly and I love Jamaica as well. I love Jamaica means that I feel it as a second home as well, it is the perfect escape for me. Greece has a richer history, whereas Jamaica is more exotic, but when we talk about the people, the music and the feeling I get when I am there, these two countries are very similar to me”.*





*Female, Brazilian, 36, master graduate, pharmacist*

*106: “My favorite place for vacations is Fernando de Noronha, Brazil. It is all year destination for vacations, because there is no winter time there. I have visited it twice so far. It is a magical island for Brazilian people, who normally cannot afford to go there since it is very expensive, but now it is more affordable. It is such a beautiful island, you can see turtles, dolphins, the water is totally clean, I can dive there, walk around the island, it is a natural reserved island. I love this island with all my heart! I mean that the moment I arrive there I get good energy, I feel happy there and I just cannot believe that I am actually in this place, it is really magical for me! I will definitely visit it many times in the future”.*

*Female, USA, 64, master graduate, teacher*

*065: “I like water, natural beauty and education top spot sights that relate to history in destinations for vacations. I have enjoyed Greece tremendously. Greece for me is the Greek food, the beauty between the ocean and the mountains and the knowledge that goes back to Greek history. I absolutely love Greece, it is just a natural god given beauty, it is just breathtaking, I feel very comfortable, romantic and peaceful when I am in Greece. I post pictures every day, of every port stop in Greece, with information about that port and a lot of my friends back in the USA feel that they are traveling Greece with us through my posts”.*

*Female, Irish, 47, university graduate, CEO*

*066: “Spain and Mykonos island are both favorite destinations for me. With my family, we go to Spain every year, but it is my first time in Greece and I would definitely go back to Mykonos. We have an apartment in Spain and we visit it both in summer and winter. We go to Spain the last ten years, we always go back to the same area. Mykonos is very clean, picturesque, the people are lovely, it is absolutely beautiful. I love Mykonos means that I would come and stay again in Mykonos for two weeks, I love shopping in Mykonos, I feel comfortable being around, walking around...I feel very happy! I also love Spain, I holiday there every year, I spend 12*





*weeks there and sometimes 6 weeks, so yes, I do love it! Like the outdoor living, the weather and the food...there are no arrangements there”.*

*Male, UK, 34, university graduate, health service*

*062: “Greece is my favorite destination for vacations. My family lives on Kos island, I have been there many times and I got married last year there! Greece is a very family oriented country. I love it, it is the most favorite place in the world for me! I love the people, I love the family oriented values, everything is family oriented, I love the food, I love the culture, I simply love everything! Greece is also my ideal place for vacations”.*

*Female, UK, 66, basic educational level, retired*

*067: “ USA is my favorite and ideal destination for vacations. I have visited USA approximately 20 times. They also speak English there, there are a lot of shops, I like shopping, there is a lot of variation in the country. I could say that I love the USA. Love for me is a strong word, but I mean that I enjoy myself great deal in the USA, I feel relaxed, USA suits me”.*

*Female, UK, 55, university graduate, nurse*

*069: “Tenerif is my favorite destination for vacations. There is a lot of variation in landscapes. I absolutely love it. I love the scenery, I love the people, they are very friendly, feel relaxed there. My ideal destination is New Zealand, it is similar to the UK, I like it, but I cannot say that I love it like Tenerif”.*

*Male, UK, 80, high school graduate, retired*

*068: “Porto Fino in Italy is my favorite destination for vacations. It is a very small town and old port, the houses and people are very nice, it is very different from the place I live. I absolutely love it! Love for Porto Fino is my desire to go back there”.*



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## QUESTIONS INCLUDED IN THE INTERVIEWS

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### GENERAL QUESTIONS

**1. How do you travel *most of the times*?**

- Traveling alone
- Traveling as a couple
- Family/ family with children
- With a group of friends
- Organized groups

2. Do you travel independently or with organized groups, most of the times?

3. In which period of the year do you like to go on vacations mostly? And why?

4. Your main purpose of your trips is usually leisure oriented or business/professional?

5. What kind of activities do you like to do mostly during your trips?

- *Leisure/ Personal*

Holidays, leisure and recreation

Visiting friends and relatives

Education and training

Health and medical care

Religion/pilgrimages

Shopping

Transit

Other

- *Business and professional*

Training, conferences, meetings ect

- *Combination of leisure and business*



6. Which are the primary considerations in selecting destinations for your trips?
  - Visit relatives/ friends
  - Entertainment
  - Touring
  - Explore new places
  - Visiting historical places/attractions
  - Get in touch with local people and their culture
  - Nature, environment
  - Sports / Adventure seeking
  - Relaxation

## BEHAVIORAL ATTITUDES

### FAVORITE DESTINATION FOR VACATIONS

1. Do you have a favorite destination for your vacations?
2. Which is your favorite destination?
3. Is it a destination for summer or winter vacations?
4. Have you visited your favorite destination? If yes, how many times?
5. Which is/ was the main source of information that influenced your decision to visit/learn/ get aware of your favorite destination?
  - a. Brochures and leaflets of travel agents
  - b. Web sites and Internet
  - c. Advertisements on TV, Radio, newspapers, magazines, ect.
  - d. Articles in tourism and travel magazines
  - e. Positive WOM from relatives/ friends
  - f. Personal experience from a previous travel
6. Which is the image do you have about your favorite destination? Can you name some typical/distinct attributes/characteristics of your favorite destination? What are the distinct characteristics of your favorite destination in comparison with other destinations that make it favorite?



7. How did you form this image? (eg directly by visiting the destination/personal experience from a previous travel or indirectly through advertisements, websites/internet/ word of mouth/good words from friends/relatives, travel agents, books, newspapers, magazines, tv etc)
8. Could you say that you love your favorite destination?
9. If yes, how much do you love it? From 0 not all to 10 absolutely
10. For which reason do you love your favorite destination/ what exactly did you make love your favorite destination?
11. So, how do you define your favorite destination after all ?
12. Moreover, what do you mean exactly by saying you love your favorite destination?
13. Will you visit again your favorite destination?
14. Have you suggested to your relatives/friends/acquaintances your favorite destination for vacation?
15. Do you speak for it with your friends/ relatives?

### **IDEAL DESTINATION FOR VACATIONS**

1. Do you have an ideal destination for vacations?
2. Is it the same or different from your favorite destination?
3. Which is your ideal destination? (if ideal is the same with favorite the following questions are excluded)
4. In what exactly your ideal destination differs from your favorite?
5. Is it a destination for winter or summer vacations?
6. Have you visited your ideal destination? If yes, how many times?
7. Which is/ was the main source of information that influenced your decision to visit/be aware of/learn about your ideal destination?
  - Brochures and leaflets of travel agents
  - Web sites and Internet
  - Advertisements on TV, Radio, newspapers, magazines, ect.



- Articles in tourism and travel magazines
- Good words from relatives/ friends (word-of-mouth)
- Personal experience from a previous travel

8. Which is the image do you have about your ideal destination? Or which are the main characteristics/ attributes of your ideal destination? What are the distinct characteristics of your ideal destination in comparison with other destinations that make it ideal?

9. How did you form this image? (eg., directly by visiting the destination/personal experience from a previous travel or indirectly through advertisements, websites/internet/ word of mouth/good words from friends/relatives, travel agents, books, newspapers, magazines, tv etc)

10. Could you say that you love your ideal destination?

11. How much do you love it? From 0 not at all to 10 absolutely

12. For which reason do you love your ideal destination/ what exactly did you make love your ideal destination?

13. So, how do you define your ideal destination after all ?

14. Moreover, what do you mean exactly by saying you love your ideal destination?

15. Will you visit again your ideal destination?

16. Have you suggested to your relatives/friends your ideal destination for their vacation? Do you speak for it with your friends/ relatives?

#### **DIFFERENCES BETWEEN IDEAL AND FAVORITE DESTINATION**

- In what exactly does your favorite destination differ from your ideal destination?
- How much does your favorite destination differ from your ideal? From 0 to 10 scale (0 completely different to 10 not at all)



## DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

- Nationality
- Gender
- Educational level
- Monthly income
- Job
- Age
- Marital Status (single, married, widowed, divorced)



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## QUESTIONNAIRES OF THE STUDY

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STUDY 2



Dear participant,

*This questionnaire constitutes a part of an academic research in Tourism Marketing, which is conducted by the University of Piraeus in Athens, Greece and it is anonymous. As a valued tourist/traveller/visitor of destinations/places around the world, your opinion is extremely important in helping us to monitor your perceptions and emotions about your favorite and ideal tourist destinations. The complex and unique characteristics of a destination present a challenge to the academic research in tourism marketing and your answers will contribute in understanding and predicting the actions that tourists/visitors take in accordance with the feelings, meanings, and values that they assign to a place/destination.*

*Please spare some minutes of your precious time to complete this questionnaire.*

*Thank you very much for your participation.*

*Dimitra Lykoudi,*

*PhD Candidate in Marketing*

**Section 1**

1. Do you have a favorite destination/place for vacations? If yes, which is your favorite destination?.....
2. Do you have an ideal destination/place for vacations? If yes, which is your ideal destination?.....  
(note: your favorite destination/place can be either different or the same with your ideal and vice versa)
3. Have you visited your favorite destination? If yes, how many times?.....  
(note: ignore the following question if your favorite is the same with your ideal destination)
4. Have you visited your ideal destination? If yes, how many times?.....
5. Do you love your favorite destination/place? (Yes or no?)...

(note: answer questions 6 and 7 only if you love your favorite destination)

6. How much do you love your favorite destination/place?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all					Neutral					Absolutely

7. Could you define "love" for your favorite destination? In other words, what do you mean exactly by claiming that you "love" your favorite destination?

8. Do you love your ideal destination/place? (Yes or no?).....





(note: answer questions 9 and 10 only if you love your ideal destination)

9. How much do you love your ideal destination/place?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all					Neutral					Absolutely

(note: answer the following question only if you love your ideal destination)

10. Could you define “love” for your ideal destination? In other words, what do you mean exactly by claiming that you “love” your ideal destination?

**Section 2 : Interpersonal and destination love**

(answer questions 11, 12, 13 and 14 only if you love your ideal or favorite destination or both)

11. In the previous questions, you defined your love towards ideal or/and favorite destination. When you defined your love for a destination/place, did you have as a benchmark your interpersonal love feelings or not? In other words, did you define your love for a destination taking into account your interpersonal love feelings or not? .....

12. Therefore, your love towards destinations/places compared to your interpersonal love is:

a. Intense

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Destination love is <b>not at all intense</b> compared to interpersonal love					Neutral					Destination love is <b>much more intense</b> than interpersonal love

b. Complex

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Destination love is <b>not at all complex</b> compared to interpersonal love					Neutral					Destination love is <b>much more complex</b> than interpersonal love



c. Objective

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Destination love is <b>not at all objective</b> compared to interpersonal love					Neutral					Destination love is <b>much more objective</b> than interpersonal love

d. Vague/abstract

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Destination love is <b>not at all abstract/vague</b> compared to interpersonal love					Neutral					Destination love is <b>much more abstract/vague</b> than interpersonal love

13. Overall, how much does “destination/place love” differ from “interpersonal love”?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Destination love is <b>completely different</b> from interpersonal love					Destination love is <b>neither completely different nor very similar</b> to interpersonal love					Destination love is <b>very similar</b> to interpersonal love

14. In what exactly do they differ (if you think that they are/tend to be different) or in what exactly are they similar (if you think that they are/tend to be similar)?



**Section 3**

The questions of this section are about your opinion for the concepts of love, like, passion and emotional attachment

15. Please indicate the emotional intensity of the following concepts:

a. Passion

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all emotional intensity					Neutral					Extremely high in emotional intensity

b. Like

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all emotional intensity					Neutral					Extremely high in emotional intensity

c. Emotional attachment

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all emotional intensity					Neutral					Extremely high in emotional intensity

d. Love

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all emotional intensity					Neutral					Extremely high in emotional intensity

16. Please indicate the complexity of the following concepts:

a. Passion

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all complex concept					Neutral					Extremely complex concept

b. Like

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all complex concept					Neutral					Extremely complex concept

c. Emotional attachment

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all complex concept					Neutral					Extremely complex concept

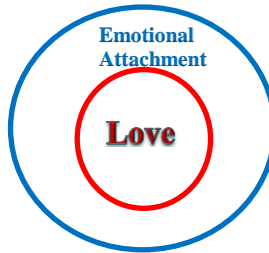
d. Love

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all complex concept					Neutral					Extremely complex concept

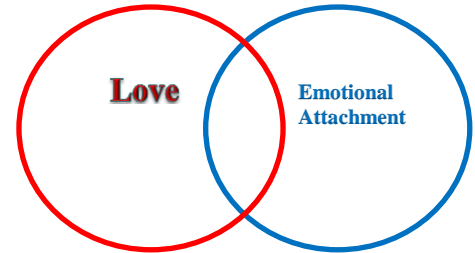
17. Please indicate the picture that best describes your opinion about love and emotional attachment



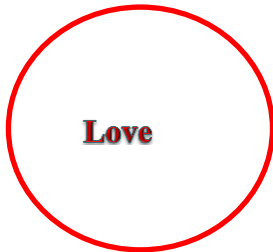
A. Emotional attachment is part of love



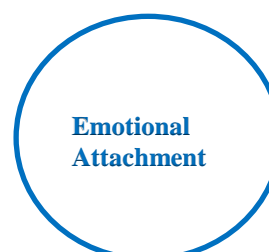
B. Love is part of emotional attachment



C. There is an overlap between love and emotional attachment

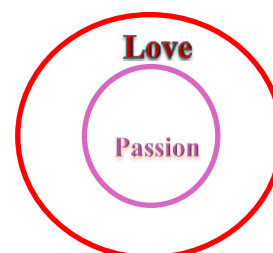


D. Love and emotional attachment are distinct concepts

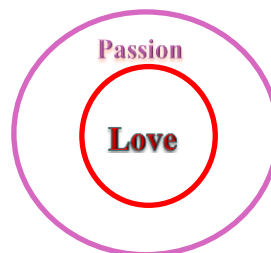


E. Love and emotional attachment are the same concept

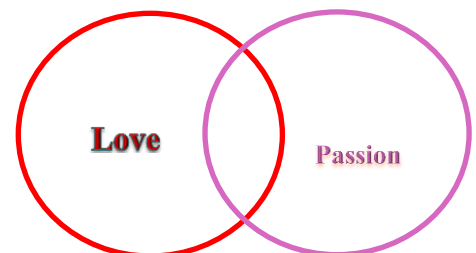
18. Please indicate the picture that best describes your opinion about love and passion



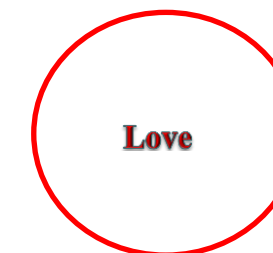
A. Passion is part of love



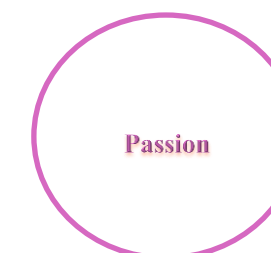
B. Love is part of passion



C. There is an overlap between love and passion

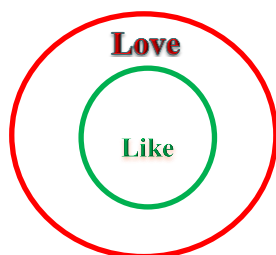


D. Love and passion are distinct concepts

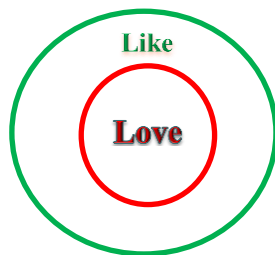


E. Love and passion are the same concept

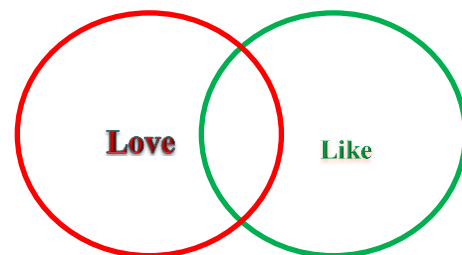
19. Please indicate the picture that best describes your opinion about love and like



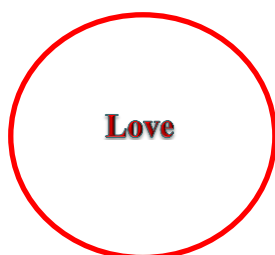
A. Like is part of love



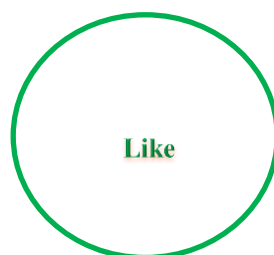
B. Love is part of like



C. There is an overlap between love and like



D. Love and like are distinct concepts



E. Love and like are the same concept

#### Section 4

An academic research, which was held from June 2016 until October 2016, revealed that people perceived their love towards destinations/places as:

- A. **Self-love** (e.g., found & discovered myself in this place, it helped me to appreciate and love myself -more-, this place represents the power in my soul, inspires me, have a contact with my inner self when being there, this place stimulates all my senses, experience fully myself there, spirituality, become a better person, contributes to my self expansion (personal or/and business), self-actualization etc)
- B. **Interpersonal-bidirectional kind of love with the locals** (e.g., feel strong affection and connection with the people of this destination/place, love the people of this destination/place, there is mutual understanding with the people of this place, feel welcomed, same spirit with the people of this place etc)
- C. **Passionate-romantic driven behavior** (e.g. passionate desire to visit the destination, passionate way of living in this destination, personal involvement and interaction with the destination directly or indirectly, feel romantic when I am there etc)
- D. **Self - destination integration** (e.g., This destination/place reflects myself, seems familiar to me, makes life meaningful, makes life worth living, gives life purpose, is inherently important, have frequent thoughts of it, desire to live in this destination/place)
- E. **Positive emotional connection** (e.g., feel comfortable being there, feel safe, this destination meets needs perfectly, fits tastes perfectly, natural fit, love the uniqueness and authenticity of this place, it is what I have been looking for, emotional attachment with this destination/place, feel relaxed, happy, harmonious, excited, amazed when I am in this place)
- F. **I have a long term relationship with this place** (e.g., I have visited this place many times and I will continue to visit it in the future, desire to visit it again and again, feel sense of long term commitment)
- G. **Nostalgia** about this place
- H. Other, which one?.....



20. Which of the above destination love-statements of Section 4 reflect you mostly? Please choose maximum 2 love-statements and describe them in details in your own words  
Destination- Love statement1:

Destination Love statement 2:

**Section 5 : Brand love**

(answer the following questions only if you love a brand)

- 21. Do you love a brand? If yes, which one?.....
- 22. Have you used/bought this brand? .....
- 23. How much do you love this brand?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all					Neutral					Absolutely

24. What do you mean exactly by saying you love this brand? Could you please define brand love?



25. Your love towards destinations compared to your brand love is

a. Intense

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Destination love is <b>not at all intense</b> compared to brand love					Neutral					Destination love is <b>much more intense</b> than brand love

b. Complex

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Destination love is <b>not at all complex</b> compared to brand love					Neutral					Destination love is <b>much more complex</b> than brand love

c. Objective

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Destination love is <b>not at all objective</b> compared to brand love					Neutral					Destination love is <b>much more objective</b> than brand love

d. Vague/abstract

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Destination love is <b>not at all abstract/vague</b> compared to brand love					Neutral					Destination love is <b>much more abstract/vague</b> than brand love

26. Overall, how much does “destination/place love” differ from “brand love”?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Destination love is <b>completely different</b> from brand love					Destination love is <b>neither completely different nor very similar</b> to brand love					Destination love is <b>very similar</b> to brand love

27. In what exactly do they differ (if you think that they are/tend to be different) or in what exactly are they similar (if you think that they are/tend to be similar)?



28. Your love towards brands compared to your interpersonal love is:

e. Intense

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Brand love is <b>not at all intense</b> compared to interpersonal love					Neutral					Brand love is <b>much more intense</b> than interpersonal love

f. Complex

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Brand love is <b>not at all complex</b> compared to interpersonal love					Neutral					Brand love is <b>much more complex</b> than interpersonal love

g. Objective

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Brand love is <b>not at all objective</b> compared to interpersonal love					Neutral					Brand love is <b>much more objective</b> than interpersonal love

h. Vague/abstract

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Brand love is <b>not at all abstract/vague</b> compared to interpersonal love					Neutral					Brand love is <b>much more abstract/vague</b> than interpersonal love

29. Overall, how much does “brand love” differ from “interpersonal love”?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Brand love is <b>completely different</b> from interpersonal love					Brand love is <b>neither completely different nor very similar</b> to interpersonal love					Brand love is <b>very similar</b> to interpersonal love

30. In what exactly do they differ (if you think that they are/tend to be different) or in what exactly are they similar (if you think that they are/tend to be similar)?





**Section 6: Demographic characteristics**

Gender.....

Nationality.....

Age...

Educational level (Basic/High school graduate, student, university graduate, master degree, PhD).....

Job.....

Monthly income.....

Marital status (single, married, divorced, widowed).....



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**STUDY 3**

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## Questionnaire

Dear participant,

This questionnaire constitutes a part of an academic research in Tourism Marketing, which is conducted by the University of Piraeus in Greece and it is anonymous. As a valued tourist/visitor of destinations/places around the world, your opinion is extremely important in helping us to monitor your perceptions and emotions about holiday destinations. Your answers will contribute in understanding and predicting the actions that tourists/visitors take in accordance with the feelings and values that they assign to a holiday place/destination. Please spare some minutes of your precious time to complete this questionnaire. Thank you very much for your participation.

Dimitra Lykoudi,  
PhD Candidate in Tourism Marketing

Please mark with a ✓ the box () that corresponds your answer!

### SECTION 1: The questions of this section are about holiday details

1. Please indicate which one of the following holiday groups you usually fall into:

- Traveling alone
- Traveling as a couple
- Family/ family with children
- With a group of friends
- As part of an organized group

2. What travel packages do you usually prefer?

- All inclusive packages (*transportation, food and lodging are all provided at an inclusive price*)
- Self administered vacations (*I buy each tourism service separately*)

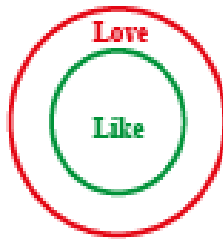
3. Please name the most important activity for you during your holidays :

.....

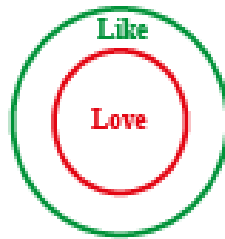
4. Do you have at least one favorite / preferable holiday destination/place?

- YES
- NO

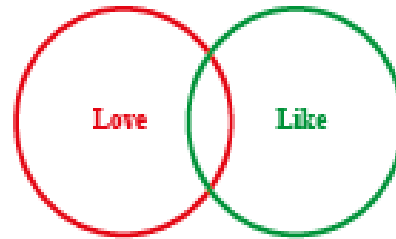
5. Please choose the picture that best describes your opinion about the concepts of love and like



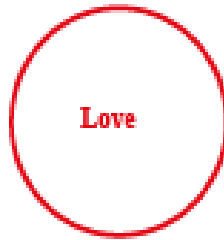
A. Like is part of love



B. Love is part of like



C. There is an overlap between Love and like



D. Love and like are distinct concepts



E. Love and like are the same concept

6. Please choose the 2 most important characteristics that a place must have in order to be your most favorite / preferable (Rank with 1 the most important and 2 the second most important)

Respect for the environment	Variety of activities/ things to do	High quality standards of tourism services and products	High level of tourism providers' professionalism	Friendly and hospitable locals
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Luxury	Safety/security	Unique cuisine	Unique sights/ attractions/ history/art	Unique scenery/ landscape
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Night life/ entertainment/ events	Familiarity with home/customs	Unique experiences	Value for money place	Easy access
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unique local lifestyle/customs	Simplicity/ serenity	Climate	Childhood memories	Other, specify....
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

*NOTE: If you do not have a favorite / preferable holiday place please go directly to the 9th section of the questionnaire (last page) concerning the demographic characteristics.*

7. How many favorite / preferable holiday destinations/places do you have?

1    2    3    4 or more  
        

8. Name your most favorite / preferable holiday destination / place .....

- 2 -



*All the following questions are about your most favorite / preferable holiday destination / place*

9. Have you visited your most favorite / preferable holiday destination / place ?

YES NO

NOTE: If you answered YES to question No 9 answer all the following questions.  
If you answered NO please go directly to section 2

10. How many times have you visited this holiday destination/place?

1 2 3 4 5 or more

11. Please rate the 2 most important factors that influenced your decision to visit this holiday destination (note: Rate with 1 the most important factor and with 2 the second most important factor):

Brochures and leaflets of travel agents   
Official web sites of the destination, other web sites   
Social media, tripadvisor, etc   
Advertisements on TV, Radio, newspapers, magazines, etc   
Articles in tourism and travel magazines   
Good words from relatives/ friends (word-of-mouth)   
Information Kiosks of the destination's National Tourism Organization   
Other, please specify.....

12. How many nights do you spend on average at this holiday destination/place?

I do not stay overnight  | 1 night  | 2 nights  | 3 -4 nights  |  
5 - 7 nights  | 8 -10 nights  | 11-14 nights  | 15+ nights  |

13. If you spend 1 or more nights at this holiday destination, please mark the most typical type of your accommodation:

Hotel  Relatives/friends  Camping  Rental rooms  My own house

Other, please specify.....

14. Please rate the 2 most important activities for you during your holidays to this destination/place (note: Rate with 1 the most important activity and with 2 the second most important activity during holidays):

Get in touch with local people and their culture   
Touring   
Entertainment   
Visiting historical sights/attractions   
Sports/adventure seeking   
Relaxation   
Explore new places   
Other, please specify.....



**SECTION 2:** The influence your most favorite/preferable holiday destination/ place has/had on you

Please indicate the degree of your agreement or disagreement with each of the following:

	<i>Totally Disagree</i>	<i>Mostly Disagree</i>	<i>Somewhat Disagree</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Somewhat Agree</i>	<i>Mostly Agree</i>	<i>Totally Agree</i>
This place inspires me	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
This place helps to discover myself	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
This place brings out the best version of me	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
This place makes me appreciate myself more	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
When I am in this place, I feel the real me	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
This place stimulates all my senses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
This place improves my self confidence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
This place improves my self- awareness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
This place makes me understand the real values in life	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Visiting this place is a personal investment for me	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
This place fulfils my mind and soul	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
This place contributes to my self- balance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
This place contributes to my self- actualization	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**SECTION 3:** Elements of your behavior towards your most favorite/preferable holiday destination/place

Please indicate the degree of your agreement or disagreement with each of the following:

	<i>Totally Disagree</i>	<i>Mostly Disagree</i>	<i>Somewhat Disagree</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Somewhat Agree</i>	<i>Mostly Agree</i>	<i>Totally Agree</i>
I have a passionate desire to visit this place	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel passionate about this place	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel a sense of longing to visit this place	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel attracted by this place	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If I could never visit this place again, I would feel miserable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
This place triggers my romantic feelings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I spend my time passionately in this place	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel nostalgic about this place	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I miss this place often	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel sad when I am not able to visit this place	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**SECTION 4:** Your opinion about the local people of your most favorite/preferable holiday destination/place

Please indicate the degree of your agreement or disagreement with each of the following:

	Totally Disagree	Mostly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Mostly Agree	Totally Agree
I feel strong affection towards the locals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel welcomed by the locals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
There is mutual understanding with the locals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel strong connection with the locals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel strong affinity towards the locals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I share the same values with the locals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Locals are very kind towards me	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The hospitality in this place is great	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have created personal relationships with the locals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Locals are friendly towards me	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I love the people of this place	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
This place inspires me	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**SECTION 5:** Degree of matching between you and your most favorite/preferable holiday destination/place

Please indicate the degree of your agreement or disagreement with each of the following:

	Totally Disagree	Mostly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Mostly Agree	Totally Agree
This place helps present myself to others as the person I want to be	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
This place makes me look like I want to look	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
This place makes me feel like I want to feel	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
When I am in this place, I feel like I am home	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
This place reminds me of home	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
This place reflects myself	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel that I belong to this place	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
This place is an important part of myself	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
This place has influenced my way of thinking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
This place has broadened my competences (eg., skills, knowledge)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
This place has broadened my interests	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
This place has given new perspectives in my life	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
This place makes my life meaningful	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
This place makes life worth living	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
This place is inherently important for me	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I experience feelings of desire to live in this place	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I frequently find myself thinking about this place	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
This place comes directly to mind when	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I want to go on vacations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel happy when I think of this place	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I frequently find myself thinking about visiting this place	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



**SECTION 6:**

Emotions about your most favorite/preferable holiday destination/place

Please indicate the degree of your agreement or disagreement with each of the following:

	<i>Totally Disagree</i>	<i>Mostly Disagree</i>	<i>Some what Disagree</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Some what Agree</i>	<i>Mostly Agree</i>	<i>Totally Agree</i>
I feel happy when I am in this place	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel relaxed when I am in this place	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel harmony when I am in this place	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel amazed by this place	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel alive when I am in this place	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel safe in this place	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel emotionally attached with this place	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
This place means a lot to me	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
This destination is very special to me	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
No other place can provide the same holiday experience as this destination	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I would not substitute this place for any other place	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
This destination is the best place for what I like to do during my holidays	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I love the uniqueness of the place	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I love the authenticity of the place	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel unique/special because of having visiting this place	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel psychologically comfortable when being in this place	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
This place meets my needs perfectly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
This place fits my tastes perfectly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I do care about the place	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I love the place because I have roots from there	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I (would) feel sad if something bad happens to this place	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>





**SECTION 7:** Your Attitude towards your most favorite/preferable holiday place/destination

Please indicate the degree of your agreement or disagreement with each of the following:

	<i>Totally Disagree</i>	<i>Mostly Disagree</i>	<i>Somewhat Disagree</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Somewhat Agree</i>	<i>Mostly Agree</i>	<i>Totally Agree</i>
I will visit this place the next time I go on vacations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I intend to keep visiting this place	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am a loyal visitor of this place	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have recommended this place to other people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I try to spread the good- word about this place	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have encouraged other people to visit this place	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I give this place tons of positive word of mouth advertising	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I 'talk up' this place to my friends	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I will be visiting this place for a long time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I expect that this place will be part of my life for a long time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have a sense of long term commitment with this place	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**SECTION 8:** Your degree of satisfaction about your most favorite/preferable holiday destination/place

Please indicate the degree of your satisfaction or dissatisfaction with each of the following:

	<i>Totally Dissatisfied</i>	<i>Mostly Dissatisfied</i>	<i>Somewhat Dissatisfied</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Somewhat Satisfied</i>	<i>Mostly Satisfied</i>	<i>Totally Satisfied</i>
Overall satisfaction from attractions/sites	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overall satisfaction from accommodation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overall satisfaction from nutrition	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overall satisfaction from transportation facilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overall satisfaction from shopping	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overall satisfaction from ancillary services (e.g.banks, postal services, hospital)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overall satisfaction from activities that are offered	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overall satisfaction from available packages/offers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overall satisfaction from the place	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

How much do you love your most favorite/preferable holiday destination/place?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all					Neutral					Absolutely

How much does Greece identify with your most favorite/preferable holiday destination/place?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all					Neutral					Absolutely



**SECTION 9:** Demographic characteristics

**9.1. Please indicate your nationality:**

- Greek
- German
- French
- Italian
- Spanish
- American (USA)
- Australian
- British
- Other, please specify .....

**9.2. Please indicate your educational level**

- Basic/High School Graduate
- Student
- College/university graduate
- Master (M.A, MSc) graduate
- PhD

**9.3. Please indicate your gender**

- Male  Female

**9.4. Please indicate your age**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 15-18 years old <input type="checkbox"/> | 36-45 years old <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 19-25 years old <input type="checkbox"/> | 46-55 years old <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 26-35 years old <input type="checkbox"/> | 56 + years old <input type="checkbox"/>  |

**9.5 Please indicate which one of the following income per month ranges you fall into**

Note: Please select between Euro or English pounds or American dollars or other (*please specify*)

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Under 1000 €     | <input type="checkbox"/> Under £885       | <input type="checkbox"/> Under \$1140     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1001-1999€       | <input type="checkbox"/> £886- £1769      | <input type="checkbox"/> \$1140-\$2275    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2000-2999€       | <input type="checkbox"/> £1770- £2653     | <input type="checkbox"/> \$2276-\$3415    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3000-5000€       | <input type="checkbox"/> £2654- £4.425    | <input type="checkbox"/> \$3416-\$5695    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> More than 5000 € | <input type="checkbox"/> More than £4.425 | <input type="checkbox"/> More than \$5695 |

Or other, specify.....

Thank you very much for your participation!

