

## FACTORS AFFECTING AN ISLAND'S IMAGE AS PERCEIVED BY TOURISM DEMAND AND SUPPLY

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*The development and competitiveness of a tourism destination is subject to its ability to attract tourists – willing to visit the place - and tour operators – willing to promote the destination. This ability depends on a number of factors affecting the image of the destination. A literature review reveals that most of the studies referring to tourism destinations focus on the factors attracting tourists, i.e. the demand side and very few on the factors attracting the supply side.*

*The objective of this paper is to identify, for the case of island destinations, the common factors i.e. those which affect both demand and supply side and hence determine what we shall be referring to as the destination's Basic Image and the specific factors i.e. those which affect one of the sides only and hence, together with the Basic Image, determine what we shall be referring to as the destination's Specific Images as perceived by the two sides respectively.*

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**Key Words:** *Tourism, Tourism Destination, Image of Tourism Destination, Island Destination, Tourism Demand, Tourism Supply*

### INTRODUCTION

The development of a tourism destination depends mainly on its ability to satisfy a set of basic criteria in order to attract and retain both

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tourists willing to visit the destination and tour operators willing to promote it (Tsoka, Angelis and Dimaki, 2011). Obviously, no uniform standards exist. Hence, every destination, in order to remain attractive should find out the standards prevailing each time and try to meet them (Kotler et al., 1999).

A literature review reveals that very few studies on the factors affecting the image of a tourism destination attempt to compare the perceptions of both tourists and tour operators, in order to find out the common factors which are crucial for the success and sustainability of a tourism destination. More precisely, only 3 out of 142 such studies, conducted from 1973 to 2000, take into account both the demand and the supply side (Pike, 2002).

Our objective in this paper is to explore the factors affecting the image of a tourism destination for both tourists and tour operators, compare them and identify the common factors i.e. those considered important by both groups as well as the specific factors i.e. those considered important by one group only. The common factors will determine what we shall be referring to as the Basic Image of a tourism destination. This Basic Image together with the factors affecting each of the two groups only will determine what we shall be referring to as the Specific Images of the destination as perceived by the demand and the supply side respectively.

The paper consists of four sections. After this brief introduction the second section introduces the concept of a tourism destination's image and distinguishes between Basic Image and Specific Images. The third section presents the methodology used to identify the factors affecting both the Basic and Specific images of an island destination. Finally, the fourth section summarizes the conclusions and makes suggestions for further research.

## **THE CONCEPT OF A TOURISM DESTINATION'S IMAGE**

### **Defining the Term Image**

The term image has been used in a variety of meanings. Image is the sum of beliefs, ideas and impressions. It is the total impression an entity makes on the minds of people and has great influence on the way people perceive things and react to them (Dowling, 1998; Dichter, 1985).

Marketing literature agrees that Image is important in this process and identifies different types of images, including projected and received place images (Kotler et al., 1993). Projected place images are defined as the sum of ideas and impressions of a place that is available for people's consideration. Those impressions are received by individuals and influence them during the process of creating their own personal image of a region, according to their own needs, motivations, previous experience, preferences and other personal characteristics (Ashworth and Voogd, 1990; Gartner, 1993; Bramwell and Rawding, 1996).

### **Defining a Tourism Destination and its Image**

Tourism destinations have been defined in different ways. Some of the most widely accepted studies define a tourism destination "as a package of tourism facilities and services, which like any other consumer product, is composed of a number of multi-dimensional attributes" (Ritchie, 1993) or "as an amalgam of products and services available in one location that can draw visitors from beyond its spatial confines" (Murphy, Pritchard and Smith, 2000).

The definitions of the image of a tourism destination seem to follow a similar pattern, as far as variety is concerned. In an early attempt image is defined as "an attitudinal concept consisting of the sum of beliefs, ideas and impressions that a tourist holds of a destination" (Crompton, 1979). Later studies have shown that tourists' evaluation of a tourism destination image "comprised cognitive, affective and personality dimensions" (Hosany et al., 2006). Especially in the case of islands "improved modern transportation, in particular air transport, is crucial for the determination of the image tourists hold for the destination, as they are only accessible by air and sea" (Bardolet and Sheldon, 2008).

Recently, the awareness of current and potential conflicts between economic growth, social progress and preservation of the environment has led to the concept of sustainability. Sustainable tourism destination “is a complex term that has emerged from the need to develop tourism destinations in a sustainable manner, and therefore the need to recognize the efforts to develop destinations accordingly (Foh Lee, 2001). In general “the end result of the adoption of sustainability strategies must include measures for the conservation and protection of environment, as well as land use planning in general. If these strategies are to have a positive impact on the environment, they must incorporate a regulatory framework in relation to the environment” (Rodriguez et al, 2008). Factors related to sustainability seem to play a crucial role in the determination of the Image of a tourism destination, especially in the case of islands (Santana-Jimenez & Hernandez, 2011), and should be taken into consideration in any relevant research.

Moreover, many studies have indicated the great importance of measuring the Image of a tourism destination in order to develop tourism. According to Selby and Morgan (1996) “the conceptualization and measurement of place image can create new opportunities for destinations seeking to develop tourism. Place image techniques can be used as a policy analysis tool, enabling strengths and weaknesses of the product and its naïve images to be assessed”. Along the same lines, Bigné et al. (2001) stated that “image is a key factor in the hands of destination managers. It is a direct antecedent of perceived quality and satisfaction and of the intention to return and to recommend the destination. It is also a key factor in influencing the choice of holiday destination. Destination managers should therefore not delay in taking a serious approach to their image”.

### **Introducing the Concepts of a Tourism Destination’s Basic and Specific Image**

The growth or decline of a tourism destination depends on its power to «pull» both tourists willing to visit it and tour operators/travel agents

willing to promote it; this pulling power depends on what we call the Image of a tourism destination. Tourists and tour operators/travel agents choose a given destination on the basis of their perception of the destination's relative attractiveness (i.e. of its relative advantages or disadvantages). Their choice is therefore a function of a multitude of factors economic, social and environmental. At each time instant the destination "sends out" its image and depending on its impact on the people (both tourists and tour operators/travel agents) the destination may be considered attractive or non attractive.

One may argue that since people "receiving" the image of the destination belong to various distinct groups (i.e. tourist and tourism professionals) and are sensitive to different factors; the impact of the destination's Image on the members of each particular group will be different (Kotler et al., 1999). Whilst this argument is plausible literature and evidence suggest that all groups react similarly to a basic set of factors; more precisely, a set of minimum standards, largely common to both groups, must be satisfied if the destination is to be considered as a potential choice by any of them. Admittedly, no uniform standards exist. Hence, every destination, in order to be/remain attractive, should determine the standards pertaining each time and try to meet them (Kotler et al., 1999).

To reconcile these two views we refine the concept of a destination's Image by introducing the following two concepts: Basic Image and Specific Image. The Basic Image of a given destination measures the degree to which the destination satisfies a set of basic criteria, common for both tourists and tourism professionals. A destination satisfying those criteria is considered by both groups as worth a closer examination and as a potential final choice.

The Specific Image of a given destination, as perceived by a particular group of people, measures the degree to which the members of that particular group consider the destination as their best final choice. This Specific Image, however, although a function of specific factors appealing mainly to members of that group, is primarily a function of the Basic Image.

## **FACTORS AFFECTING AN ISLAND DESTINATION'S IMAGE**

The main objective of this paper is to identify the common factors i.e. those which affect both the demand and the supply side and hence determine what we shall be referring to as the destination's Basic Image and the Specific factors i.e. those which affect one of the sides only and hence together with the Basic Image determine what we shall be referring to as the destination's Specific Images as perceived by the two sides respectively.

Towards this end the following three steps are followed

- In the first step, we undertake a literature review and set up an extensive list of factors, affecting a tourism destination's image.
- In the second step, a field research study is carried out to test the significance of all variables, included in the extensive list, in defining the tourism destination's image in the case of an island, as perceived by European tourists and tour operators. This leads to a reduced list of factors.
- Finally, in the third step Principal Component Analysis is applied on the factors of the reduced list in order to:
  - Group them into components.
  - Identify the components which are common for both tourists and tour operators.
  - Identify the components affecting one group only.

Those three steps are presented in detail below.

### **Literature Review**

Many researchers (Beerli and Martin, 2004; Baloglu and Brinberg, 1997; Baloglou and McCleary, 1999; Baloglu and Mangaloglu, 2001; Chon, 1991; Echtner and Ritchie, 1993; Chi and Qu, 2008; Murphy et. Al., 2000; Lin and Huang, 2009; Crompton, 1979; World Tourism Organization, 1985; Fodness, 1994; Bansal and Eiselt, 2004) have tried to define the most important factors that turn a region into an attractive

tourism destination. An extensive literature review has revealed a great variety of factors affecting the image of a tourism destination.

Our first step in this study is to set up a list of the most commonly used of those factors and classify them into three groups: economic, social and environmental factors as shown in Table 1. Each of the forty seven factors included in this Table will be a respective variable in the quantitative analysis that we follow and its significance in affecting both the demand and the supply side, or only one of them or none of them will be tested.

**Table 1** Variables affecting the Image of a Tourism Destination

<b>Economic factors</b>	<b>Social factors</b>	<b>Environmental factors</b>
Economic development	Quality of life	Beauty of the scenery and landscape
Cost / Prices	Gastronomy	Feeling close to the nature
Value for money	Social interaction (language barriers)	Unpolluted and unspoiled environment
Quality of services	Hospitality of local residents	Hygiene and cleanliness
Tax regime	Customs / Local way of life	Atmosphere
Regulatory framework	Political Stability	Traffic
Technological Level	Safety	Climate
Currency	Religion	Overcrowding
Promotion	Cultural attractions (i.e. concerts, theaters, festivals e.tc.)	Beaches
Accessibility (i.e. availability of flights, ferries etc to the destination)	Historical attractions (i.e. museums, historical buildings, monuments e.tc.)	Sense of isolation
Geographical Location		Sense of escaping from the ordinary environment
Information availability		
Tourist Infrastructure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accommodation infrastructure</li> <li>• Food and beverage services</li> <li>• Sports facilities</li> <li>• Other outdoor activities</li> <li>• Shopping facilities</li> <li>• Nightlife / Entertainment</li> </ul> (Recreational Activities) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Theme parks</li> </ul>		



Transportation (i.e. metro facilities, buses e.tc.)		
General infrastructure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health services infrastructure (i.e. hospitals, doctors etc)</li> </ul> Telecommunications infrastructure (i.e. fast internet connections e.tc.)		
Proximity to the place of tourist's residence		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proximity to any big city</li> </ul>		
Availability of tour packages		

### **Field Research**

To test the significance of each of the 47 variables, presented in the previous section, in affecting an island destination's image a field research has been conducted using a random sample of 500 sampling units (i.e. 400 tourists and 100 tour operators/travel agents) from the 31 European countries (i.e. Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Estonia, Ireland, Greece, Spain, France, Italy, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Hungary, Malta, Netherlands, Austria, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Finland, Sweden, United Kingdom, Iceland, Norway, Switzerland and Croatia). The sample includes also a number of tourists and tour operators/travel agents from Turkey and Russia, as those countries have a critical role in the European tourism map.

The demand side sampling units have been approached by personal contact in the departures' area of the Athens International Airport from the 24<sup>th</sup> of November 2012 to the 9<sup>th</sup> of December 2012. The outbound flights schedule was used as a sampling frame. The supply side sampling units have been approached by e-mail, from the 2<sup>nd</sup> of May 2012 to the 11<sup>th</sup> of June 2012. The sampling method used in both cases was stratified random sampling. The proportion of each country's population over the total European population was used in order to determine the number of tourists from each country, to be included in the sample. Similarly, the proportion of the number of tour operators / travel agents operating in

each country over the total number of tour operators / travel agents operating in Europe, was used in order to determine the number of travel professionals from each country to be included in the sample.

Two questionnaires have been designed in order to collect the data from tourists and tourism professional respectively. Each questionnaire consists of five units and tests the effect, on the participants' choice of tourism destination, of the 47 variables presented in the previous section, each of which represents a respective characteristic of the destination.

The first unit, which differs between the two questionnaires, uses 4 closed questions to collect the participants' demographic data. The remaining four units are identical in both questionnaires they use closed questions and a five point Likert scale (1-5) in measure the important of each variable, where 1 indicates a variable of low importance and 5 indicates a variable of high importance. More specifically, the second unit uses 16 questions in order to test the importance, on the participants' choice of destination of characteristics related to the destination's its overall development, such as economic development, price levels, currency, accessibility, health infrastructure. The third unit tests the importance of features related to the destination's tourism infrastructure, such as accommodation, historical attractions, using 11 questions. The fourth unit tests the importance of social factors, such as political stability, security, religion etc., using 8 questions. Finally, the fifth part uses 12 questions in order to test the importance of environmental features, such as beauty of the scenery, unpolluted environment, overcrowding.

The participants were asked to answer the questions trying to recall what attracts them to visit an island destination, if they were tourists, or to promote an island destination if they were tour operators / travel agents. It should be mentioned that tourist is defined as any person that has travelled at least once in his / her lifetime, as the survey examines the variables that determine the image of a tourism destination before visiting the destination, i.e. during the decision – making stage. As Beerli and Martin (2004) mention there are differences between the images perceived by the tourists before and after the visit to a destination.

The collected data were processed and Tables 2 and 3 summarize the twenty most important variables affecting the image of an island destination for tourists and tour operators / travel agents respectively, in a descending order of their mean level of significance, as given by the questionnaire's respondents. As it can be seen the majority of those factors are common for both groups. Nevertheless, there are also some specific factors, highlighted in the Tables, which seem to be important only for the tourists or the tour operators / travel agents respectively.

**Table 2.** Top 20 Variables determining the Image of an Island Destination  
 - The case of Tourists

Variables	Mean level of significance
Natural beauty of the scenery	4,40
Sense of security	4,35
Quality of services	4,35
Value for money	4,34
Hygiene and cleanliness	4,25
Accessibility	4,18
Sense of escaping from the ordinary environment	4,11
Ambience	4,09
Accommodation infrastructure	4,02
Historical attractions (i.e. monuments, museums, historical buildings e.tc.)	4,00
Unpolluted and unspoiled environment	3,96
Prices	3,95

Hospitality of the residents	3,90
Beaches	3,87
Feeling close to the nature	3,87
Information availability	3,84
Political stability	3,83
Local gastronomy	3,77
Climate	3,71
Local way of life (i.e. the existence of special customs and traditions)	3,69

**Table 3** Top 20 Variables determining the Image of an Island Destination - The case of Tour Operators / Travel Agents

Variables	Mean level of significance
Value for money	4,62
Quality of services	4,52
Prices	4,51
Accessibility	4,44
Beaches	4,43
Accommodation infrastructure	4,41
Natural beauty of the scenery	4,33
Hygiene and cleanliness	4,32
Sense of security	4,18

Unpolluted and unspoiled environment	4,17
Food and beverage services	4,10
Information availability	4,09
Climate	4,09
Sense of escaping from the ordinary environment	4,09
Ambience	4,04
Health services infrastructure	4,02
Feeling close to the nature	4,02
Nightlife	3,95
Promotion	3,95
Local gastronomy	3,95

Looking at the variables included in Tables 2 and 3 the following comments may be made.

- Variables like theme parks and shopping facilities which were important a few decades ago (Echtner & Ritchie, 1993) seem to have lost most of their influence.
- Similarly variables expressing the socioeconomic dimension of the destination, such as economic development, technological level and quality of life, seem also to have lost some of their importance, compared to the results of earlier studies (Chi & Qu, 2008).
- On the contrary environmental variables, such as natural beauty of the scenery and unspoiled environment, seem to have gained in importance, compared to the results of earlier studies (Bansal & Eiselt, 2004).

- Finally, most of the location related variables, such as proximity to the place of tourists' residence, proximity to any city center and geographical location, have not found to be important; on the contrary variables expressing the destination's isolation, such as feeling close to the nature and sense of escaping from the ordinary environment, seem to have gained in importance, compared to the results of earlier studies (Bansal & Eiselt, 2004).

### **Grouping of the Variables**

The variables presented in the previous section have been further analyzed in order to find out those which are important for both groups and hence determine the Basic Image of an island destination and those which are important for one group only and hence, together with the Basic Image, determine the Specific Images of an island for tourists and tour operators / travel agents respectively. Exploratory Factor Analysis has been used for each sample in order to group the variables playing a crucial role into respective components in the formation of a tourism destination's image. As Field (2004) mentions "there could be variables that correlate highly with a group of other variables, but correlate very badly with variables outside of that group. These variables with high intercorrelations could well measure one underlying variable, which is called a 'factor' or a 'component'".

However, before running the Exploratory Factor Analysis, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy and the Bartlett's test of Sphericity have been applied in order to check its suitability for the given case. Tables 4 and 5 summarize the results of these tests for the tourism demand and tourism supply samples respectively.

#### **Table 4** KMO and Bartlett's Test – the case of Tourists

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.	,798
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity Approx. Chi-Square	2064,183
df	190
Sig.	,000

**Table 5** KMO and Barlett's Test – the case of Tour Operators / Travel Agents

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.	,698
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity Approx. Chi-Square	1343,552
df	190
Sig.	,000

Barlett's test is highly significant for both samples ( $p < 0,001$ ) and indicating that factor analysis is an appropriate method. Moreover, KMO statistic is greater than 0,5 for both groups and indicating that the data collected are sufficient and can support a valid factor analysis.

Having completed the two tests we proceed with factor extraction. Principal Component Analysis has been used as an extraction method for both samples and six components have been extracted for both tourists and tour operators / travel agents with eigenvalues greater than 1. Tables 6 and 7 summarize the total variance explained by these six components for each sample. The cumulative percentage column indicates that the components extracted explain approximately 62% of the total variance for the sample of tourists and approximately 77% of the total variance for the sample of tour operators / travel agents.

**Table 6** Total Variance Explained – the case of Tourists

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	4,826	24,128	24,128	4,826	24,128	24,128	2,850	14,251	14,251
2	2,619	13,095	37,223	2,619	13,095	37,223	2,305	11,525	25,776
3	1,415	7,074	44,297	1,415	7,074	44,297	2,104	10,522	36,298
4	1,352	6,760	51,057	1,352	6,760	51,057	1,919	9,595	45,893
5	1,103	5,516	56,573	1,103	5,516	56,573	1,907	9,533	55,426
6	1,065	5,326	61,899	1,065	5,326	61,899	1,295	6,473	61,899
7	,886	4,429	66,328						
8	,834	4,172	70,501						
9	,777	3,885	74,386						
10	,699	3,493	77,879						
11	,628	3,140	81,019						
12	,596	2,979	83,997						
13	,570	2,852	86,850						
14	,520	2,602	89,452						
15	,455	2,273	91,725						
16	,408	2,039	93,764						
17	,390	1,948	95,712						
18	,329	1,643	97,355						
19	,286	1,428	98,782						
20	,244	1,218	100,000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

**Table 7** Total Variance Explained – the case of Tour Operators / Travel Agents



Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	8,671	43,355	43,355	8,671	43,355	43,355	4,541	22,706	22,706
2	2,400	12,002	55,358	2,400	12,002	55,358	3,343	16,713	39,419
3	1,906	9,529	64,887	1,906	9,529	64,887	3,059	15,294	54,713
4	1,513	7,563	72,450	1,513	7,563	72,450	2,699	13,495	68,208
5	1,232	3,406	75,856	1,232	3,406	75,856	2,245	6,161	74,369
6	1,002	1,602	77,458	1,002	1,602	77,458	1,850	3,089	77,458
7	,701	3,504	80,962						
8	,633	3,163	84,125						
9	,592	2,959	87,084						
10	,448	2,239	89,322						
11	,384	1,922	91,244						
12	,328	1,641	92,885						
13	,299	1,493	94,378						
14	,232	1,160	95,538						
15	,197	,983	96,520						
16	,167	,837	97,357						
17	,159	,796	98,154						
18	,150	,749	98,903						
19	,107	,533	99,435						
20	,087	,565	100,000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Once the components have been extracted, factor rotation has been carried out in order to calculate the factor loadings and thus facilitate to improve the components' interpretation. As the underlying factors are independent, orthogonal rotation and more precisely the varimax method has been chosen, since it tries to load a smaller number of variables onto each factor, thus resulting in more interpretable clusters of factors (Field, 2000). As Stevens (1992) suggests, factor loadings less than 0.4 should be omitted, because only loadings greater than 0.4 represent substantive values. Tables 8 and 9 summarize the results of factor rotation for each sample. The twenty variables initially tested for each group have been reduced to seventeen, as three variables loaded less than 0.4 in all the factors extracted for each sample. The two of those variables availability of enough information of the destination and local gastronomy, are common for both groups. The third variable is political stability in the case of tourist and advertising promotion of the destination in the case of tour operators.

**Table 8** Factor Rotation – the case of Tourists

<b>Demand Side - Rotated Component Matrix<sup>a</sup></b>						
	Component					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Feeling close to the nature	,801					
Natural beauty of the scenery	,796					
Unpolluted and unspoiled environment	,744					
Ambience	,616			,443		
Sense of escaping from the ordinary environment	,556					
Political stability						
Sense of security		,791				
Hygiene and cleanliness		,692				
Accessability		,519				
Information availability						
Value for money			,885			
Prices			,777			
Quality of services			,692			
Local way of life (i.e. the existence of special customs and traditions)				,748		
Hospitality of the residents				,641	,504	
Historical attractions (i.e. monuments, museums, historical buildings etc.)				,632		
Local gastronomy						
Accommodation infrastructure					,595	
Beaches						,907

Climate						,593
Extraction	Method:	Principal	Component	Analysis.		
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.						

**Table 9** Factor Rotation – The case of Tour Operators / Travel Agents

Supply Side - Rotated Component Matrix <sup>a</sup>						
	Component					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Unpolluted and unspoiled environment	,779					
Sense of escaping from the ordinary environment	,769					
Natural beauty of the scenery	,670					
Ambience	,619					
Feeling close to the nature	,560					
Accesibility		,856				
Sense of security		,553				
Hygiene and cleanliness		,537				
Promotion						
Information availability						
Prices			,791			
Value for money			,683			
Quality of services			,627			
Health services infrastructure				,796		
Nightlife				,731		
Food and beverage services				,646	,413	
Local gastronomy						

Accommodation infrastructure					,867	
Beaches						,857
Climate						,571
Extraction	Method:	Principal	Component	Analysis.		
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.						

Looking at Tables 8 and 9, we can see five common components, containing variables affecting an island destination's image as perceived for both tourists and tour operators / travel agents and one specific component containing variables affecting the destination's image as perceived by each of the two groups respectively. Based on the type of variables included in each component, a name has been selected for each of those components.

Table 10.1 summarizes, for the tourism demand group, the labeled factors, the variables included in each of them and their mean level of significance as shown in Table 2.

Table 10.2 ranks the factors of the previous group in a descending order of their variables' mean level of significance.

Tables 11.1 and 11.2 are similar to Tables 10.1 and 10.2, but for the tourism supply group.

**Table 10.1** Factors affecting the Image of an Island Destination  
 – The case of Tourists

1 Natural Environment	Me an level of sig	2 Reacha bility	Me an level of sig	3Val ue for Mon ey	Me an level of sig	4 Local Attract ions	Me an level of sig	5 Tourism Infrastru cture	Me an level of sig	6 Beach es	Me an level of sig
Natural beauty of the scenery	4,40	Sense of security	4,35	Quality of services	4,35	Historical attractions (i.e. monuments, museums, historical buildings etc)	4	Accommodation infrastructure	4,02	Beaches	3,87
Sense of escaping from the ordinary environment	4,11	Hygiene and cleanliness	4,25	Value for money	4,34	Hospitality of the residents	3,9			Climate	3,71
Ambience	4,09	Accessibility	4,18	Prices	3,95	Local way of life (i.e. the existence of special customs and traditions)	3,69				
Unpolluted and unspoiled environment	3,96										
Feeling close to the nature	3,87										
	<b>4,09</b>		<b>4,26</b>		<b>4,21</b>		<b>4,00</b>		<b>4,02</b>		<b>3,79</b>

**Table 10.2** Factors' Ranking – The case of tourists

Ranking	Factor	Mean level of sig
1	Reachability	4,26
2	Value for Money	4,21
3	Natural Environment	4,09
4	Tourism Infrastructure	4,02
5	Local Attractions	4,00
6	Beaches	3,79

**Table 11.1:** Factors affecting the Image of an Island Destination – The case of Tour Operators/ Travel Agents

1 Natural Environ- ment	Me- an leve- l of sig	2 Reach- abili- ty	Me- an leve- l of sig	3 Valu- e for Mon- ey	Me- an leve- l of sig	4 General Infrastruc- ture	Me- an leve- l of sig	5 Tourism Infrastruc- ture	Me- an leve- l of sig	6 Beach- es	Me- an leve- l of sig
Natural beauty of the scenery	4,33	Accessibility	4,44	Value for money	4,62	Food and beverage services	4,10	Accommodation infrastructure	4,41	Beaches	4,43
Unpolluted and unspoiled environment	4,17	Hygiene and cleanliness	4,32	Prices	4,51	Health services infrastructure	4,02			Climate	4,09
Sense of escaping from the ordinary environment	4,09	Sense of security	4,18			Nightlife	3,95				
Ambience	4,04	Promotion	3,95								

Feeling close to the nature	4,02									
	4,13		4,22		4,57		4,02		4,41	4,26

**Table 11.2** Factors' Ranking – The case of Tour Operators / Travel Agents

Ranking	Factor	Mean level of sig
1	Value for Money	4,56
2	Tourism Infrastructure	4,41
3	Beaches	4,26
4	Reachability	4,22
5	Natural Environment	4,13
6	General Infrastructure	4,02

The five factors, common for tourists and tour operators / travel agents, are Natural Environment, Reachability, Value for Money, Tourism Infrastructure and Beaches. The variables included in them are important for both groups and determine the Basic Image of a tourism destination. On the other hand, Local Attractions and General Infrastructure are the specific factors for tourists and tour operators / travel agents respectively; therefore together with the Basic Image they may determine the Specific Images for each group respectively.

However before deciding whether to use these specific factors in defining the respective Specific Images for the two groups, the Mann Whitney Non Parametric Test has been applied so as to find out which of the variables included in them have statistically significant different means between the two samples and hence should be taken into account in the definition of the Specific Images. A Non Parametric test has been chosen as the Kolmogorov – Smirnov test of normality indicated that the

respective data do not follow the normal distribution (Sig < 0,05). Tables 12 and 13 summarize the results of the Mann Whitney test for the specific variables affecting tourists and tourism professionals. As it can be seen Historical Attractions, Health Services Infrastructure, Nightlife and Food and Beverage Services, are the only variables with statistically significant different means between the two samples. Hence, the first variable will be used for the definition of the Specific Image for the supply side whereas the last three variables will be used for the definition of the specific image for the demand side.

**Table 12** Factors affecting the Tourists – Mann Whitney Test

	Hospitality of the residents	Local way of life	Historical Attractions
Mann-Whitney U	13399,500	14427,000	11304,500
Wilcoxon W	16969,500	17997,000	74494,500
Z	-1,484	-,484	-3,618
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	,138	,628	,000
a. Grouping Variable: Group of participant			

**Table 13** Factors affecting the Tour Operators/ Travel Agents – Mann Whitney Test

	Health Services Infrastructure	Nightlife	Food and Beverage Services
Mann-Whitney U	10780,000	8232,500	11385,000
Wilcoxon W	77575,000	71778,500	74931,000
Z	-4,689	-6,868	-3,928
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000	,000
a. Grouping Variable: Group of participant			



## **CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

Many earlier studies have tried to determine the factors affecting the Image of a tourism destination, but most of them have focused on the factors attracting tourists and have almost ignored the factors which may attract a tour operator/travel agent so as to promote the tourism destination. The present paper attempts to bridge the gap between the demand and the supply side in the case of an island destination. More specifically, it has identified the common factors affecting both tourists and tour operators / travel agents but also the specific factors affecting each group only. Natural Environment, Reachability, Value for Money, Tourism Infrastructure and Beaches were found to be the common factors. On the other hand, Local Attractions appeal mainly to tourists whereas General Infrastructure appeals mainly to the tourism professionals. Obviously, each of these factors contains a number of variables; those variables properly measured and scaled provide a composite measure for each factor.

The paper's findings seem to fully support the use of the concepts of Basic and Specific Image and their definitions as given in this paper. Indeed the findings seem to suggest that there exists a set of variables affecting both tourists and tour operators which maybe used to define the destination's Basic Image. In addition to them there also exists a number of variables affecting each group separately which, together with the Basic Image, maybe used to define the destination's Specific Images. Summarizing we can say that the Basic and Specific Images of an island destination as defined in this paper, may prove very useful managerial tools for the destination's authorities. By monitoring all factors, common and specific, affecting those images and taking all the appropriate measures to sustain and improve them, a problem free development of the destination can be ensured.

At this point, it is also worth mentioning that all location related variables, such as distance from the place of residence, proximity to any city center and geographic location of the destination, were not found to

be important for any group. This confirms earlier research findings (Crompton, 1979) indicating the limited importance of location and geographical discontinuity on an island destination's image and eventually its success. On the contrary, factors expressing the isolation of the destination, such as feeling close to the nature and sense of escaping from the ordinary environment, seem to have gained in importance, compared to the results of earlier studies (Bansal & Eiselt, 2004).

An area of further research could be to test the factors affecting the Image of the tourism destination for both demand and supply side, by selecting not a European but a global sample. Another area of further research would be to elaborate on the factors affecting the Image of a tourism destination for alternative types of tourism such as conference tourism, health tourism, agricultural tourism, cultural tourism etc.

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